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Official UK

PlayStation Magazine

No. 25

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**MY BROTHER
WENT TO
VICTORIAN LONDON
AND ALL HE
BROUGHT BACK
WAS THIS LOUSY
TEE SHIRT.**

NIGHTMARE

CREATURES

SONY



Start up

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH'S CD?



As if a completely exclusive playable demo of *PaRappa The Rapper* wasn't enough, this month's disc also holds six other demos, including a new version of *Abe's Odysee*. Not bad, eh?

EXCLUSIVE DEMOS 8 Vol 2

PLAYABLE
PARAPPA THE RAPPER
 "You gotta do what?" "I gotta rap!"
 Can you rap with the chameleon?

VIDEO
BUSHIDO BLADE
 Take a first look at SquareSoft's fantastic new beat 'em up.

PLAYABLE
CROC
 Small, green and scaly, this Croc is a fine 3D platformer.

VIDEO
NET YAROZE
 Your first chance to check out how the Yaroze is shaping up.

PLAYABLE
TEST DRIVE 4
 Take a spin in this racing, impressive driving game.

VIDEO
DEATHTRAP DUNGEON
 Are Eidon producing the greatest 3D adventure for the PlayStation? Watch...

PLAYABLE
ODDWORLD
 It's Abe's Oddysee. Again.

PlayStation



Croc



Bushido Blade



Test Drive 4



Oddworld



Deathtrap Dungeon



PaRappa The Rapper

PaRappa The Rapper **Playable**

Without a doubt the most quirky, original and unique game ever to appear on the PlayStation.

Croc **Playable**

3D platform games seem to have come back into fashion these days, and this cute little number is one of the best so far.

Test Drive 4 **Playable**

Race some serious cars along some seriously dangerous roads.

Oddworld **Playable**

Just in case you couldn't get it to work the month before last, here's a chance to experience the strange land of *Oddworld: Abe's Odysee*.

Deathtrap Dungeon **Rolling**

A 3D adventure, developed by Core and published by Eidon? Could this be the fantasy *Tomb Raider*?

Bushido Blade **Rolling**

Take an early look at the stunning new 3D beat 'em up from Square.

Net Yaroze **Rolling**

The first look at just what is possible if you get your hands on a Yaroze.



The Official UK PlayStation Magazine is two years old, and my haven't we grown? From a dinky little

100-pager into the chunky, glossy, sophisticated (UK's fastest growing) magazine that you see before you. Of course, I remember when all of these pages were just fields, you know. There was none of this new-fangled putting CDs in plastic cases malarkey, either. No, we just ripped open the paper packet, wiped the glue off the CD so that it didn't jump, and got on with it. You did in them days. We didn't have this *G-Police* nonsense either, just honest-to-goodness platform games. Now it's all real-time, FMV-quality action with thrills and suspense around every corner, where the characters seem almost real and the game lasts for weeks. Who needs that, eh? Keeping you up all night and interfering with your personal life. Now, I'm as keen on progress as the next man, but when it takes you all week just to read your favourite games magazine, then you have to draw the line somewhere. Give me the good old days, any time...

Rob Pegley

Rob Pegley (Editor)

Contents

Editorial

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Judge Dredd



UEFA Football



The Fifth Element

PRIMAL SCREEN

Judge Dredd 28

The star of comic 2000AD makes his debut on the PlayStation. It's Gremlin's answer to *Time Crisis* but can it deliver? See how it's shaping up...

UEFA Football 30

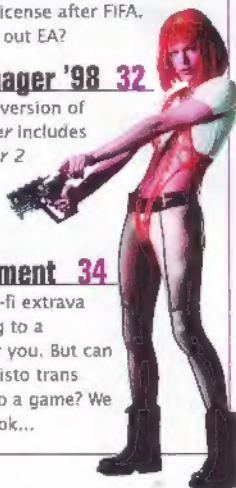
It's the biggest license after FIFA. Can Ocean take out EA?

Premier Manager '98 32

Gremlin's latest version of *Premier Manager* includes the *Actua Soccer 2* engine for the recorded high lights. Wahay!

The Fifth Element 34

Luc Besson's sci-fi extravaganza is coming to a PlayStation near you. But can French coders Kalisto trans late the film into a game? We take an early look...



PREPLAY

Tomb Raider 2 44

It's almost as if the ubiquitous Lara Croft has never been away...

Final Fantasy VII 48

It's only sold five million in Japan. SquareSoft's massive RPG is set to take Europe by storm...

Beast 52

This Hudson Soft beat 'em up has kind of snuck up unnoticed. But it looks rather impressive.

Broken Sword 2 54

Revolution's original cartoonular graphic adventure set standards. The sequel looks even better.

Discworld 2 56

Terry Pratchett and Psygnosis join forces for another comic adventure.

Touring Cars 58

Or *TOCA*, as it's known. Production saloons take to the track.

Crash 2 60

Naughty Dog's long-nosed marsupial returns in this issue's Sequel City.

Red Asphalt 62

It's a futuristic, 3D racing game with big guns. Written by Interplay.

Actua Soccer 2 64

Barry, Trevor and the lads are back as Gremlin try to tackle *ISS Pro*.

Grand Theft Auto 66

Have DMA Design written the most controversial videogame ever?

Red Alert 68

Westwood Studios' huge selling PC wargame aims for the PlayStation.



The Official UK PlayStation Magazine is dedicated to bringing its readers the most up-to-date information on all aspects of PlayStation gaming. Close links with Sony Computer Entertainment give us exclusive access to the very latest software and news, plus the coveted official demo CD which graces the magazine every month. Our game reviews are the most in-depth, honest and authoritative in the market, offering independent, unbiased buying advice. PSM, the biggest-selling videogames magazine in the UK.



Wonder toy

A celebration of Sony's success

PLAYTEST

G-Police 96

Psygnosis fly in with yet another fantastic PlayStation title.

Croc 101

We've had *Jumping Flash* but everyone's been waiting for the first 3D platformer.

Total Drivin' 105

Looks like Not another driving game? Why yes, and it's actually very good.

Rapid Racer 108

SCEE's powerboat racer is ready to ride the waves.

Hercules 112

It's Disney's game of the film. Heavens, it even looks like the film. But is it as good?



Street Fighter EX+CL 117

How many fights in the street can one have? Loads, of course.

Mega Man Battle 120

We'll be frank. And up front. This game is not exactly *Mario Kart 64*.

Nightmare Creatures 123

Kalisto unleash their adventuresome, 19th century beat 'em up.

Mega Man 8 127

When he's not involved in *Battle and Chase*, he hops across platforms.

Frogger 130

Why did the frog cross the road? Because he wanted to be in a videogame. Again.

Devil's Deception 132

It's got puzzles, it's got platforms. And there's lots of wandering. But is it deceptively good?

FEATURES

Wonder Toy 70

Just how did Sony sneak up on the giants of the videogame industry Sega and Nintendo and proceed to steal their thunder? We explore the reasons why the PlayStation has had such a massive impact across the world. We round-up and rate every game ever released for the PlayStation and then look ahead to what we can expect from PlayStation 2.



REGULARS

Loading 7

All the latest news on PlayStation.

Subscriptions 35

Sign for a year and get a free game.

Letters 38

Just what have you been saying?

Q&A 42

All your queries answered.

Back Issues 69

Complete your PSM collection.

Top Secret 134

Tips and cheats for *Vandal-Hearts* and many more.

On the CD 142

The complete instructions of how to play this month's cover-CD games.

Official Questioning 146

CTW's Stuart Dinsey.

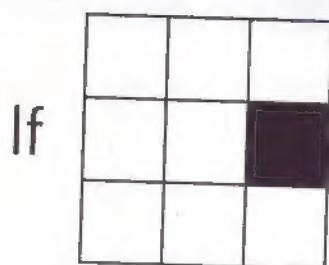
The question mark should be replaced by what number?



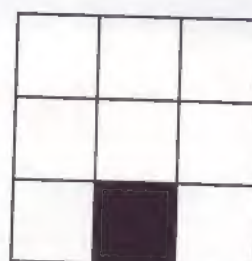
What is the missing value?



Complete the equation



equals 4



equals ?

IF YOU CAN SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS,
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It's what your IQ's been asking for



LOADING

1% COMPLETE

Update

All Quiet on the West End Front

ECTS provides few surprises

As we predicted in the last issue, there were few big announcements to write home about, or even to our readers, at the latest ECTS. No price cuts, no major surprises on the release front and few speeches slagging off the competition as is historically expected of such industry bashes.

The European Computer Trade Show has settled down into what really is a 'trade' event now, as retailers get their chance to see products that the magazines have already previewed, deals are done between advertisers and marketing managers, while journalists starved on any real news catch up with familiar faces and get plastered. One thing that can be gleaned for magazine purposes, however, is a general attitude towards products and the overall mood of the industry. And at the moment that mood is great – at least for Sony.

With Sega's product still in decline, it was down to Nintendo to wrestle away Sony's mantle as the most important console publisher at the show. Unfortunately for them they didn't even come close. The relatively small showing from Nintendo highlighted their somewhat lacklustre approach towards the European market, something which is now starting to frustrate N64 journalists in this country. Indeed it is the PC which vied for the show's top dog status, but as Chris Deering, SCEE's president, was keen to stress, it is not really a market competitor, with PC and PlayStation ploughing completely different furrows.

Sony's stand was as ever the biggest at the show, with Eidos following closely behind in terms of the number of visitors. Mainly because of its strong portfolio (including of course *Tomb Raider 2*), but also because of

the bevy of scantily clad women present.

Other show talking points included Virgin's expected sell-off, a few games that had slipped through the PlayStation magazine's net, the number of casualties from the previous nights' parties, and the continuing success of *Lara Croft*. These days it is the US and Japanese shows where products really surface, but for more details of the major stories and products to come out of ECTS turn to the next spread.



[1] Random people mill about in front of large screens – it can only be ECTS. Having said that, they don't really look drunk enough. [2] SCEE president Chris Deering was in bullish mood.



Talk Show

Although devoid of any really big announcements there was plenty to keep journalists talking at the shows various bars. Of all the industry psycho-babble these were the five main topics that kept the PlayStation word-mongers gossiping.

1. EA to buy Virgin?

Virgin Interactive are up for sale (see overleaf) and the rumour is that their biggest European publishing rival is in to buy them. The \$250 million price tag is proving a slight barrier though.

2. Lack of Nintendo product

Yet again Nintendo failed to impress in a European

environment, showing how far their thinking is in this country from their own homelands.

3. "That Swedish ball-rolling game (have you seen it etc...)"

Being developed by a Swedish company, *Kula Quest* was a simple, yet addictive, game involving rolling balls in a certain order. New to everyone.

4. *Tomb Raider* now voted PC game of the year After sweeping the boards last year, *Tomb Raider* this year was voted the best PC game at the ECTS awards. A

5. Gremlin to release *Men in Black* Gremlin announced a huge licence to follow hot on the heels of *Judge Dredd*.



INDUSTRY TALK

As predicted by us last month, ECTS threw up very few surprises in terms of the games being shown, especially as PSM prides itself on being ahead of the competition. But with 'throw up' as the operative phrase we went in search of the speedy lager-filled underbelly of the computer industry and unearthed a veritable Videogames Babylon.

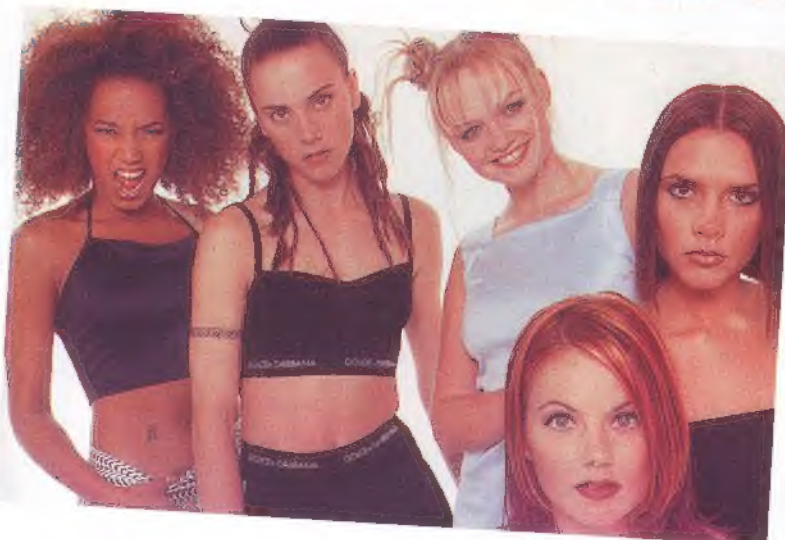
Top of the list of stories circulating was that of a certain Influential Future Publishing editor (let's not beat about the bush, it was James Binnis of PC Format), who was (allegedly) asked to leave the Activision stand after vomiting into a cardboard box half way through his appointment with the company, following a night of heavy partying and a quick play of *Hexen 2*. The story was given an even better punchline because ECTS veteran James had given new members of Future staff a pep talk on how to behave at the show, one of his quotes being 'Whatever you do don't drink too much, there's nothing worse than being sick and making a fool of yourself'.

Elsewhere Ian Hetherington, the MD of Psygnosis, was refused entry to the prestigious Sony party by a bouncer because he had no ticket. After then attempting the tried and tested 'Do you know who I am?' method of entry, Mr Hetherington was assured quite forcibly and with colourful language that the bouncer indeed did not know who he was, much less care. In similar circumstances, Chris Deming, president of SCE, was refused entry to the Ocean party - lucky for ocean that V-Rally was already safely through Sony's vetting process.

At the quiet Eidos party, Blur did not play despite rumours that they might. More popular was the Eidos stand, where Playboy beauty Lisa Boyle was posing with computer journalists and retailers for photos. No, not those sort of photos. The clamour of businessmen desperate to get their photos taken with her was embarrassing even by ECTS standards.

Girl Power meets PlayStation power

PlayStation to Spice up Christmas market



Last year the Spice Girls had the Christmas number one, as *Two Become One* sat at the top of the pop charts. This year the girls are heading for a unique double with *Spice World*, the new Spice Girl PlayStation game, a late contender to storm the games chart this yuletide.

As we predicted back in PSM 22, Sony duly won the contest with Sega and Nintendo to produce a game starring Sporty, Scary, Sexy, Baby and Posh, and *Spice World* will hit the streets in time for Christmas.

The title will feature video footage of the girls, together with full track listings and even an option to create your own dance routines. And with younger PlayStation owners in mind, the title will be released for only £20. At that price, there is no doubt that the Spice Girls really wannabe the PlayStation number one.



Games firms try to pick up Virgin

Virgin Interactive up for grabs

If you think you have a spare \$250 million knocking about down the back of the sofa at the moment, then fish it out and you could become the proud owner of Virgin Interactive, the highly successful third-party games publisher which currently resides as a subsidiary of Viacom.

The company profiled in issue 22 of PSM is up for sale and Viacom is currently accepting official bids, which would need to be in the region of the \$250 million figure that the company has been valued at. This is a figure which so far seems to have put off the four companies to have shown real interest in the organisation - namely Electronic Arts, Sega, GT Interactive and Spectrum Holobyte.

It is indeed a lot of money for a firm currently suffering internal problems and large losses, but the firm has massive potential still and is traditionally a major player in the software market. In terms of the PlayStation, Virgin has already published over 20 games to date (almost one tenth of the total games on sale) and have big titles such as *Red Alert* on the way. *Red Alert* also being a product of one of the firm's



(1) With games such as *Command & Conquer...* **(2)** and their aggressive advertising campaigns Virgin would make an excellent company to buy.

biggest assets, Westwood Studios. The Las Vegas-based company has turned out to be a bargain since their \$6 million purchase, five years ago, and is responsible for titles such as *Command & Conquer*.

It will be interesting to see whether Virgin is eventually purchased by one of its main European publishing rivals and what effect that would have on the PlayStation games market, but with Richard Branson said to be interested in buying back the company again, you'd do well to table your bids soon.



Quake gunning for PlayStation

PC legend to become console title



They said it couldn't be done, but Duke Nukem has been converted into a PlayStation game. Now the superb Quake could be next to make the leap from PC to console.



It has become apparent that, contrary to rumours, Quake will indeed make an appearance on the PlayStation. According to Jim Pelling, at developer Aardvark, the technology required is well within the capabilities of the PlayStation, despite other developers arguing the fact.

After only six months Aardvark has done a superb job on converting Duke Nukem to the PlayStation. And as the project has neared completion, Jim has had a chance to assess what will be needed to do a similar job on Quake and in his opinion the job should be much the same. Other than one level the game should be virtually identical to the PC version. More on this soon.



'That's it! It's war!'

Down at Comet this Christmas it's quite literally battle stations, as Sony, Sega and Nintendo go head to head in a full-on, try-before-you-buy war situation. The major electronics retailer will have an N64, a PlayStation and a Saturn set up in the shops, with similar style racing games and beat 'em ups running simultaneously so that you can compare the consoles across the same genre of games. The consoles will be set up on adjustable stations within what will be known as the Game Zone. As well as the competing consoles, a wide range of accessories will be displayed.

We suggest you hotfoot it down to Comet just to reassure yourself which console provides the best value for money and the widest choice of games. It's war down there with the major super powers... and Sega, ready to do battle.

Dominik toppling

End of the line for GamesMaster

The autumn series of GamesMaster, the seventh Channel 4 have shown, is to be its final one. The most successful videogames TV show of all time will return to our screens shortly, with Dominik Diamond once again fronting the show in what is likely to be a return to its early format: less features and more in the way of tips, news and games reviews. There will also be celebrity challenges, with Dominik choosing the celebrities himself - which means 'footballers and beautiful women' according to Jane Hewland, boss of GamesMaster's production company, Hewland International.

She also pointed out that it is Hewland itself and not Channel 4 that has taken the

decision to axe the show (to be called GamesMaster on Death Row), after repeatedly trying to get the show aired at a later time than its (ahem) graveyard shift of 6pm Wednesday evenings - the argument being that kids who have grown up with the show have, not surprisingly, grown up. And with magazines such as the Official UK PlayStation Magazine carrying an average readership age of 23, you have to go along with Hewland's observations that the industry has matured and that a different style of videogames TV programme is required.

As an alternative to Channel 4, Hewland now plans to broadcast the show on the Internet. As technology improves, it sees this as the perfect way to display what GamesMaster is about.



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The land of hope and glory

Gremlin announces a *Men In Black* game, ASCII goes joyriding, Grolier tries to cure a virus and, most important of all, break-dancing is back...

Oxford:

The name Grolier Interactive is normally associated with multi-media products, but this is set to change with the release of two new PlayStation games. *V2000* is the sequel to the classic Amiga game *Virus*, and marks the return of one of the industry's most creative designers, David Braben (of *Elite* fame). In it you control a small, shuttle-type craft travelling across six planets in search of any deadly virus carriers. Each environment provides a different challenge, from the easy first level through to the underwater level where your craft is constantly buffeted by the current. The second game, *Xenocracy*, is a space shoot 'em up with a touch of *Star Trek*-style strategy. Both of these titles will be hitting the shelves early next year.



Sheffield:

The ECTS show held few surprises, but Gremlin Interactive managed to conjure up one with the announcement that it had secured the publishing rights to the game based on the hit flick, *Men In Black*. The new title, which has been developed by an American programming team, takes inspiration from games such as *Resident Evil* and *Alone In The Dark*, with Agents J and K scouring various cities in a bid to halt an alien invasion. Gremlin also announced that it'd been granted the Olympic licence for its *Actua Ice Hockey* game, which is due out early next year. The game will feature all the Olympic teams from Nagano and already looks a treat.



London:

If you thought that PlayStation sponsorship was all about skateboards and snowboarding, you'd be wrong - Sony has just announced sponsorship of the UK Breakdancing championship, later this month. Following an absence of 10 years, the championship was revived last year due to its incredible increase in popularity. The show will be held at London's Shepherd's Bush Empire, on Sunday September 28, and will be hosted by the legendary Crazy Legs from the Rock Steady Crew. Also appearing will be the one and only Grand Master Melle Mel, regarded by many to be one of the greatest rappers of all time.



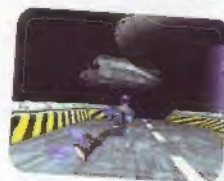
Watford:

It may have been given a new name for the European market, but there's no escaping the gameplay of *Felony 11-29* (known as *Runabout* in Japan). It puts you in charge of up to 22 different vehicles from a little Vespa to a bloody huge articulated truck. What makes this so different from other racing games is that it doesn't have a track as such, just a target and a city to drive through - you spend time searching for the target, or you drive round the city crashing into things to collect money. ASCII's second title is the adult horror game, *Clock Tower*. Set in a Norwegian mansion, the site of a terrible massacre 100 years ago, you have to guide your character out of the mansion before the ghosts of the murderers rip you to shreds. Both games will be released around November.



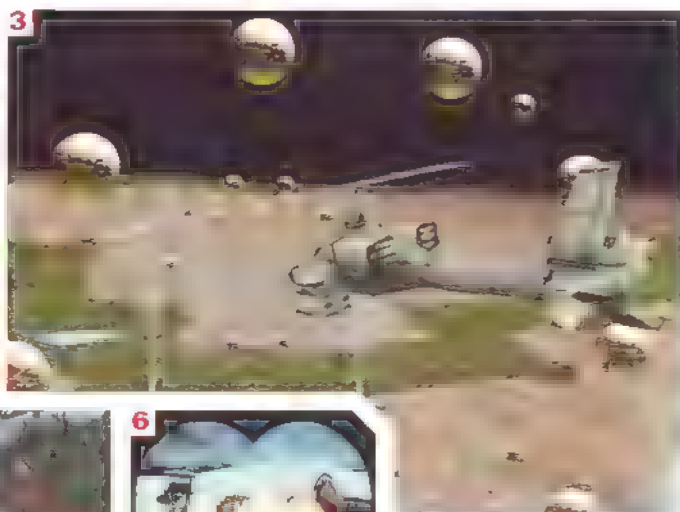
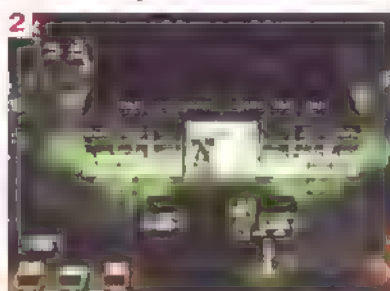
Slough:

It's not often you get a decent game based on a cartoon series, but *Reboot: Countdown To Chaos* has a head start - the cartoon was entirely animated by computers. You play Bob, a Guardian instructed to protect the world of Mainframe from the obsessive attacks of Megabyte and his army of viruses. Bob manoeuvres through Mainframe on a strange cross between a hoverboard and a snake board, allowing you full control of your movements over the 21 fully 3D levels. *Reboot* will be out in January and we'll be chatting with the developers soon.



Red Alert is set to revolutionise the strategy genre on the PlayStation, Final Fantasy mania breaks out five days early, and Funky Monkey is on his way...

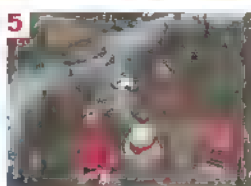
(1) *Messiah* is Dave Perry's latest baby. (2) *Front Mission 2*, from Square, is set for new success off the back of the *Final Fantasy VII* mania in the US. (3) Shiny Entertainment's flight sim, *Fly by Wire*. (4, 5, 6) *Red Alert* is set to revolutionise the strategy genre on the PlayStation with its more user-friendly controls.



Many PlayStation gamers felt that *Command & Conquer* was a disappointment. The controls didn't lend themselves well to the machine's normally versatile controller. It felt clunky and, well, just a little slow. More is expected of *Red Alert*, and Westwood says it's learned something about bringing strategy to consoles. For example, *Red Alert* will definitely support the PlayStation mouse. Hopefully there will be some kind of bundle available that will bring this useful device – and, by association, the strategy genre in general – to a wider console audience.

Westwood also says that the issue of link-to-compatibility is still unresolved. The problems aren't so much based on technology as popularity. Simply, very few people own a PSX. But if one game can make this peripheral sing, it's got to be a classic head-to-head strategy game like *Red Alert*. Other games to look forward to include better strategy movies (using the PlayStation's hardware compression). And it scrolls at an impressive 60 frames per second. According to the development guys at Westwood: "This time we feel that instead of porting, we've actually used the PlayStation to its full capacity. We've actually expanded instead of doing just a straight port. We will be changing some of the levels to make sure they feel 'for the PlayStation'."

Also exploring genres not served well by the PlayStation, *Youngblood* is much like *Diablo*, and so far it's looking like a top-down isometric strategy game with real-time combat. It stars all the characters from Rob Liefke's *Youngblood* comic book series, including Chapel and Jerry. The levels include environments ranging from the deep and dark jungles to the vast, open deserts. You also get the chance to travel to the pits of hell. Players can



pick and choose through multiple teams of four, with each team possessing different attributes. You can also enhance your characters' powers by increasing your levels and gaining special weapons.

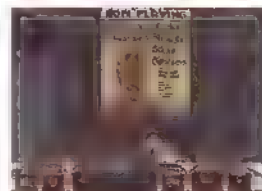
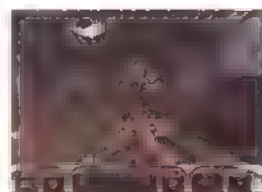
Meantime, the cute and mal-based-hero-with-attitude is alive and well. Prepare a warm welcome, please, for Blam's Funky Monkey, who'll be starring in a *Zelda*-style 3D adventure some time next year. Apparently the monkey is caught in a dream world. Armed with a magical staff, you can venture through a huge polygonal world filled with over 16 dungeons and 45 different enemies. All environments are real-time rendered scenes that are fully interactive. And yes, the monkey wears sunglasses.

Dave Perry's Shiny Entertainment team is working hard on the much-vaunted 3D graphical adventure *Messiah*. Interestingly, the PlayStation version will be out before the PC. "The console market is one that we much prefer to develop for," Perry explained. "We can't shake our console roots." According to Dave, the *Messiah* team already has a PlayStation version up and running at "amazing frame rates". Shiny, somewhat improbably, are also working on a flight sim. *Fly By Wire* is based around those make-your-own-and-try-to-stay-alive helicopters. The game will take advantage of the dual Analog joystick for the PlayStation when it ships sometime next year. "I decided to do *Fly By Wire*," Dave explains, "in order to prove that new genres of games can be developed, and all that crap about 'It has to be like *Doom*' or 'It

has to be a fighting game" is not only wrong, but just an excuse for companies to keep feeding us the same old stuff." Perry is also working on a (ahem) sequel to first-person shoot 'em up *MDK*.

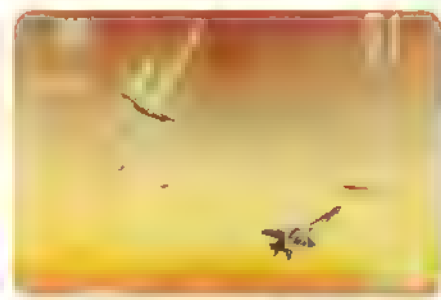
Lastly, a word about *Final Fantasy VII*. At the time of writing, the game has just gone on sale five days early in the US. And the gameplaying country has gone absolutely wild. Fueled by a year's worth of hype and a massive TV campaign, not to mention the 'shock' decision by Sony to release it early, the lines have been wriggling around stores from Wyoming to Alabama.

Following the success of *FFVII*, Square is readying strategy game *Front Mission 2*. It's set in a futuristic world, where large robotic mechs maintain order with some serious firepower. *Front Mission 2* uses a tactical perspective that's in many ways very similar to those used in *Final Fantasy Tactics*. One of the major differences in the game engine occurs when an actual encounter happens on the tactical map. Then the scene switches to a rendered 3D set of sequences where the battles between specific mechs are played out. Lasers fire, rockets launch and usually only one of the mechs is left standing at the end. As you would expect, there are a wide variety of mechs and an even wider variety of weapons for each mech's arsenal. In traditional Square fashion, the game has an extensive background story, involving a number of characters. The result is a game that promises to appeal to both strategy and RPG fans.

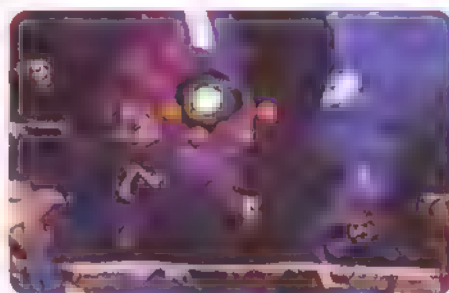


GT Interactive New York is just putting the finishing touches to *Duke Nukem* – more on that in next month's PrePlay.

Japan: Following its successful rehash of *Tetris Plus*, JVC is set to bring its aerial combat game *Wing Over* to the UK shores. It features planes from World War I to the Gulf War, including such martial marvels as the Spitfire, the Tornado and the Fokker (we just like saying that one). The game can be played in various modes – tournament, survival and versus – and planes can be upgraded with heat-seeking missiles, advanced radar and night visions scopes. But perhaps the best bit of the game will be the Versus mode, where you can fight your mates in a dog-fight using the link-up cable. *Wing Over* should be crashing on our shores sometime before Christmas.



USA: Since being formed last year, Dreamworks Interactive has taken its time developing for the PlayStation with its first game, *The Lost World*, only recently released (PSM24). The second game, *Skullmonkeys*, is based on the PC fantasy game, *The Neverhood*. Rather than ape a certain N64 game, the developers at Dreamworks have opted for a very strange 2D platformer. *Skullmonkeys* has more than 100 levels, spread over 20 bizarre worlds. Let's just say that when shown the game at ECTS, we were told to make sure we picked up any gerbils we could find, as they gave us a special shield to fend off the skullmonkeys... Look out for more bizarre details next issue.



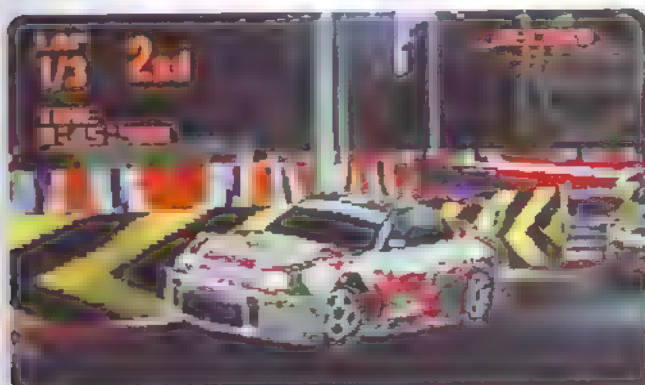
The World of PlayStation

A brilliant new racing game in Japan, monkey and gerbil-related madness in America and PlayStations going cheap in Australia...



Japan: Meanwhile, fresh from their incredible success with *ISS Pro*, the programmers at Konami have been heaving away on their latest sports game, *Winter Olympics '98*. Following the same structure as the summer version, the game will feature 10 classic winter sports, including downhill skiing, speed skating, and even snowboarding. Gamers with a MultiTap will be able to play four-player games, pitting their wits against friends, or against the computer in the tournament. Expect a release before Christmas.

Japan: Sony of Japan announced details of their latest racing opus, *Grand Turismo* or *GT*, a game set to eclipse every other racing game on the market. As in *Rage Racer*, the idea of *GT* is to win races in order to earn money with which to buy better cars. But it takes this idea to its logical conclusion, with every part of the vehicle being upgradeable, from the air filter to the exhaust pipe – you can even buy secondhand cars if you're skint. Sony have struck licensing deals with some of the biggest car manufacturers in the world, allowing them to include more than 250 drivable cars. Offering 12 tracks, *GT* is certain to impress when it's released early next year.



Australia: Our relationship with Australia is a strange one – we get their dodgy soap operas six months late and they get our PlayStation price reductions equally late. For the last six months the Aussie PlayStation has been retailing at a respectable \$299 (around £170) but SCE have announced a price drop to \$199 (close to £110). According to retail surveys of week-to-week sales, the PlayStation is the 'undisputed' console market leader, with total sales recently clocking the 200,000 mark.

FOREIGN COVERAGE



JAPAN COLUMN

38 15N 140 53E

Our correspondent reports from the Tokyo Games Show, the biggest videogames show in Japan. And with Christmas just around the corner, things were madder than ever...



(1) Capcom continues to develop *Biohazard 2*. (2) ...And the demo version drew big crowds again. (3) The Tokyo Games show is always huge. (4) *Overblood 2* proved very popular.

The Tokyo Games Show is currently the biggest exhibition of videogames in Japan, and always attracts massive crowds. Held twice yearly, the recent autumn show boasted most of the titles due to be released this Christmas, and the PlayStation confirmed its position as the most important console. Nearly half of the 492 titles shown were for Sony's machine, while only a quarter were for the Saturn.

Of the games being unveiled, SCE sprang the biggest surprise by introducing a gorgeous new racing game called *Grand Turismo*. Despite its European look, *Grand Turismo* - which is out in Japan this November - has been developed by the *Motor Toon* team. It contains 87 cars, all sponsored by their manufacturers - including Honda, Toyota, Mazda, Nissan, Subaru, and even Aston Martin and Chevrolet. Each car can be customised with up to 128 different upgrades, there'll be 11 courses, and two modes which basically equate to an arcade game and a Grand Prix championship. With its mix of great gameplay and impressive graphics, the game proved a huge hit at the SCE stand along with a Japanese version of *F1*.

Grand Turismo, from SCE, will feature no less than 87 real cars, 11 courses, and 128 upgrades. It also looks very pretty indeed.

Very close to SCE's booth was the SquareSoft stand, which impressed with its traditionally powerful array of software. Apart from *Front Mission 2* and *Front Mission Alternative*, Square also introduced a playable version of *Enhancer*, their last shooting game, as well as two new RPGs, *Xenogear* and *Chokobos Mystery Dungeon*. The latter is based on Chunsoft's popular *Siren Mystery Dungeon* series, but instead has a Chobobos (the friendly animal of the *Final Fantasy* series) as its main character. *Xenogear*, on the other hand, is more in the style of Square's *Final Fantasy* titles. The main talking point with *Xenogear* is its 3D polygon battle engine. It's reminiscent of *Final Fantasy VII*, and the player will have to defeat radical new monsters as well as some more traditional enemies. A US version is rumoured to be on the cards.

Also shown on the Square stand was *Soukaigi*, a game inspired by *Bushido Blade*. In this brand new beat 'em up, fights take place in a futuristic mix of old traditional Japan and a modern Tokyo. There are 16 characters, but Square seem to have concentrated on the adventure part of the game more than the fights. Unfortunately there was no playable version of *Parasite Eve*.

Elsewhere, Riverhill Soft were showing their latest version of *Overblood 2*. With the original game only just becoming available in the West, Japan is already preparing for the sequel. The version displayed at the show was a playable one, and it was easy to see that the motion of the characters has been improved along with the overall quality of graphics. Like the first in the series, *Overblood 2* will be a pure adventure game.

On the Capcom booth the big event was, of course, *Bio Hazard 2* (*Resident Evil 2* in the UK). The game introduced a manner of new features and offered gorgeous and bloody action scenes, confirming what an excellent title it should be.

Konami were another company showing off a large number of new software titles. The most noticeable was *Hyper Olympics In Nagano* (to be released in the UK as *Winter Olympics '98*), a Track 'N' Field style sports game to be released in conjunction with the Nagano Winter Olympic Games in February 1998. Players will be able to choose from 16 different countries and attempt 12 different winter sports. An Olympic mode enables the player to pick up individual gold medals in these events, while a Championship mode ranks the player overall, based on their performance in each of these 12 categories. The sports include alpine skiing, freestyle skiing, snowboarding, ski jumping, speed skating, bobsleigh, luge, and curling.

Perhaps the best news of the show was that Hudson at last introduced a PlayStation Bomberman game, *PlayBomberman*. This will be exactly the same as previous 2D versions of the game, with the only new feature being a 'quarter view' which allows 3D perspectives.

Finally, Bandai unveiled a demo of *R?M: The Mystery Hospital*. *R?M* (which is a weird name even by Japanese standards) features game play similar to *D The Dinner Table*, in which the player will have to use all five senses to solve mysteries. The plot will be based on a frightening story in which an earth-threatening virus is steadily spreading across the globe.



(1) Square's beat 'em up, *Soukaigi*, will have a strong story element. (2) *Chokobos Mystery Dungeon*. (3) The eagerly awaited *Xenogear*.

FIGHTING FORCE™



"The game is cool... don't be surprised if this is bigger than the original Tomb Raider."



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PC
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CORE



WINNING ECONOMIES

Platinum sales exceed the million mark

If you've bought a Platinum game in the last four weeks, then you're not alone: according to recently released figures, one third of all PlayStation games sold are from the Platinum range. Since the range was first released in March, its success has surpassed all expectations. The figures speak for themselves – the first six titles which were republished have just clocked up more than 1 million sales, with *Tekken* and *Ridge Racer* each reaching 200,000. Incredibly, sales of the new budget *Air Combat* have been greater than they were when the game was full price.

To ensure that only top quality games are released on the label, Sony has just moved the goalposts for games that qualify for the range. Now games need only to have been on sale for nine months before they can be re-released but, and this is the key change, they must have sold more than 250,000 copies across Europe. Previously, any game which had been on sale for more than a year, with sales of 100,000 copies, could be re-released.



Ridge Racer and *Tekken* have been the flagships of the Platinum range, with *Air Combat* (inset) proving popular as a budget title.



When PSM spoke to retailers they all agreed that the range had been a big factor in people's console buying decisions. David Reeves, Sony's European marketing director, commented: 'We're certain that the Platinum range has influenced people to buy the hardware, so it's increased the market as a whole. We also know that there are games like

Tekken and *Ridge Racer* which people feel they must have'. Only one more Sony game will be added to the range before March '98, but other companies are expected to republish some of their biggest titles in the run up to Christmas – what's the bet that *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil* hit Platinum before the end of the year, then?

Top 20

The Gallup top 20 on PlayStation games on sale now. With last month's placings in brackets.

- 1 [1] *V-Rally* (Ocean)
- 2 [2] *ISS Pro* (Adams)
- 3 [3] *Tomb Raider* (Eidos Interactive)
- 4 [4] *Worms* (Ocean/Team 1)
- 5 [5] *Keyman* (Lords of the Realm)
- 6 [6] *Alien Trilogy* (Acclaim)
- 7 [7] *Super-A-Move* (Lords of the Realm)
- 8 [8] *Warcraft 2* (Electronic Arts)
- 9 [9] *Real Racing* (Electronic Arts)
- 10 [10] *Power Source* (Electronic Arts)
- 11 [11] *Syndicate Wars* (Electronic Arts)
- 12 [12] *Red to Black* (Electronic Arts)
- 13 [13] *Tekken* (Lectra)
- 14 [14] *Destruction Derby* (Lectra)
- 15 [15] *Ridge Racer* (Lectra)
- 16 [16] *Soul Blade* (Lectra)
- 17 [17] *Looney* (Lectra)
- 18 [18] *Micro Machines V3* (Lectra)
- 19 [19] *Crash Bandicoot* (Lectra)
- 20 [20] *Rage Racer* (Lectra)

ChartTrack

OUT THIS MONTH

THE LATEST PLAYSTATION RELEASES

September

Surprisingly, sales this month continue to be dominated by *V-Rally*. So far 180,000 copies have been sent to shops, with Ocean estimating more than 200,000 sales. We spoke to a couple of retailers to find out what else has been selling well this month. Steve Sater, from Game in Meadowhall, said that *V-Rally* is still very much in demand: 'Considering how long it's been out, it's still selling a good deal of copies. *Syndicate Wars* is also doing very well, as is *Warcraft 2*'. It seems that gamers want a bit of intelligent gameplay before they start on the fast and furious titles lined up for the winter. Speaking of the impending flood of games, we wondered which was the most asked about title. Steve again: 'Surprisingly, everyone wants to know about *Grand Theft Auto* – perhaps they're just a gory lot up here – and there've been many enquiries about *Actua Golf 2*, *Abe's Oddysee* and *F1 '97*. We thought there'd be a lot of interest in *Final Fantasy VII* by now, but enquiries have died off since

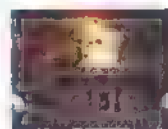
there's been little mention of the game in mags recently'. Well, we'll soon change that then.

ON SALE NOW!

Information supplied by Game, in Meadowhall, Sheffield

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|------|
| <i>Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee</i> | GT Interactive | PSM24 | 9/10 |
| <i>F1 '97</i> | Psygnosis | PSM74 | 9/10 |
| <i>Lost World</i> | Electronic Arts | PSM24 | 3/10 |
| <i>VR Baseball</i> | Interplay | PSM21 | 5/10 |
| <i>Ray Tracers</i> | SCEE | PSM21 | 7/10 |
| <i>Ray Storm</i> | SCEE | PSM23 | 6/10 |
| <i>Fantastic Four</i> | Acclaim | N.A. | N.A. |
| <i>Actua Golf 2</i> | Gremm | PSM22 | 7/10 |
| <i>International Track & Field</i> | Platinum | PSM8 | 8/10 |
| <i>Thunderhawk 2</i> | Platinum | PSM3 | 8/10 |

PlayStation Magazine RECOMMENDS



Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee (PSM24 - 9/10)

Ignoring the current trend to emulate a certain Italian plumber, this gorgeous 2D platformer is one of the most intelligent games available. Can you help Abe to free his race from slavery before they're converted into tasty snacks? Probably the best 2D platformer ever. Buy it. Now.



F1 '97 (PSM24 - 9/10)

Not only have Bizarre Creations completely re-written the game to give it a new look, a good deal more realism has been added, and there's a far greater distinction between Arcade and Grand Prix modes than in the original *F1*. An incredible game has been made even greater.



International Track & Field (PSM8 - 8/10)

It's over a year old, but with its re-release on Platinum, we thought it deserved another recommendation. Sticking to the classic joystick-abusing style of button whacking, *International Track & Field* allowed even the worst gamers to excel themselves. Absolutely brilliant in multi-player.



Ridge Racer Revolution (PSM6 - 8/10)

When it was first released, some reviewers believed this to be little more than an add-on to *Ridge Racer*. But it's more than a quick cash-in, offering a variety of cars, races and difficulty levels, not to mention all the secrets *Ridge Racer* isn't, but a fine game nonetheless.

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a tennis match between two
women. The ultimate
challenge for the ultimate
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NUCLEAR 
STRIKE







What's the score?

Fast times and PlayStation highs



V-Rally has collected some impressive high scores - keep them coming...

After receiving some truly pitiful scores from people with no shame whatsoever last issue, we decided to skip a month and spare the embarrassment of the wreckless few who sent us their pathetic efforts.

Following our recent prompting, however, 'What's the score?' returns this month with renewed vigour and some fast times which actually deserve printing. We've been inundated with high scores from *Micro Machines*, *V-Rally* and *Rage Racer*, as you can see. All of them seem highly beatable to the PSM team, though - let us know if we're right.

V-RALLY

Indonesia

| | |
|---------|---------|
| Stage 1 | 1:20.80 |
| Stage 2 | 1:06.80 |

| | |
|---------|---------|
| Stage 3 | 1:11.56 |
| MS5 | 1:12.60 |
| ES2 | 0:57.36 |

| | |
|---------|---------|
| England | |
| Stage 1 | 1:23.72 |
| Stage 2 | 1:36.20 |
| Stage 3 | 1:11.24 |
| ES4 | 1:16.48 |
| MS3 | 0:55.64 |

| | |
|---------|---------|
| Sweden | |
| Stage 1 | 1:25.72 |
| Stage 2 | 1:47.78 |
| Stage 3 | 2:24.76 |
| XS2 | 1:22.88 |
| XS7 | 1:47.26 |

Jonathan Bagley, Plymouth

MICRO MACHINES V3

One lap time trial

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Cheesy Jumps | 13.70 |
| Breakfast Bends | 32.74 |
| Swerve Shot | 11.38 |
| Love Triangle | 38.32 |
| Destruction Dirtbox | 34.06 |
| Crash and Fern | 20.08 |
| Calculator Risk | 25.26 |
| Learning Curves | 26.54 |
| Baguette Balance | 23.34 |
| Tanks a Lot | 29.50 |
| Pebble Dash | 24.08 |
| Sand Blaster | 25.36 |

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Stinky Sinks | 18.72 |
| Chemical Warfare | 22.60 |

Also from the prolific Jonathan Bagley, of Plymouth

RAGE RACER

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Mythica: Coast | 51.971 |
| Extra | 50.869 |
| Overpass City | 1:08.604 |
| Extra | 1:03.007 |
| Lakeside Gate | 1:06.713 |
| Extra | 1:04.698 |
| Extreme Oval | 21.548 |
| Extra | 21.866 |

Richard Potts, Bournemouth

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

Evil mode with the Test Driver

| | |
|--------------|--------|
| Short Tracks | |
| Stuttgart | 40.15 |
| USA | 42.9 |
| Japan | 43.0 |
| Alpine | 46.0 |
| Long Tracks | |
| Stuttgart | 58.2 |
| USA | 59.9 |
| Japan | 1:07.1 |
| Alpine | 1:17.0 |

Thanks to Lee Bryer, of Bexley.



Following its success with snowboarding and mountain biking, SCE has switched its attention to skateboarding in a bid to further the name of the PlayStation by putting its name and funds to the development of a national skateboarding park.

Funded by Sony and local charities, the skatepark, in London's Notting Hill, is designed to give skaters somewhere safe to practise. It is hoped that the park will also become home to world championships, world grand prix events, as well as national and regional tournaments. The PlayStation Skatepark was opened by the Lady Mayoress of Kensington and Chelsea, where she watched a display from some of the best skaters in the UK, showing off their spectacular stunts.

Paul McDermott, manager of the PlayStation Skatepark, said: 'There's such a high level of skill involved in extreme skating, it should be recognised as an Olympic sport. Snowboarding, which is in many respects is derived from extreme skating, will be a full Olympic sport in Japan and skating should be granted the same status'. Well, we're not too sure about the Olympic bit, but it certainly sounds a lot of fun.



Young, gifted and Blockbuster Champion

Blockbuster Games Champion is a right little Noel

Despite the average age of PlayStation owners still being in the twentysomething bracket, the Blockbusters PlayStation competition mentioned in PSM22 has been won by a 14-year-old school kid from Charlton, putting adults to shame and perpetuating the theory that kids are far better at games than us wrinklies.

After beating 10,000 entrants to the title of Blockbuster Games Champion, newly-crowned Aaron Noel, from south-east London, couldn't hide his happiness: 'Champion, what can I say? San Francisco here I come... I'm just so happy'. As you might have guessed, part of Aaron's prize will be spending two weeks in San Francisco. While there, he'll be calling in on Sony of America to be digitally mapped and slotted into their new secret game.

The event was hosted by TV presenter and well-known ego Dominik D. Amund, ably

assisted by Page 3 legend and *Loaded* favourite, Jo Guest, at the Sports Cafe in London. Before hostile ties began, the two presenters fought it out against one another in a celebrity play-off. After a bitter struggle, Dom finally overcame the young lass with a pitiful score - one that was at least four times lower than the lowest competition scores.

As for the competitors themselves, to make the games as fair as possible the judges chose the universally popular *Crash Bandicoot 2* for the trials. Competition was fierce, but eventually 22-year-old Ian Marshall from Glasgow was beaten into second place by Londoner Aaron. Afterwards, Ian told us how tired he was by the tournament: 'It was nerve-wracking, but I did my best. Number two in the country. It was a tough game and Aaron is a great games player. I'm a Scot and I hope I did my country proud'.



Blockbuster games king at only 14, Londoner Aaron Noel.

TOTAL DRIVIN



THE LIFE HE ONCE KNEW FLASHED BEFORE HIS EYES

ALL BETS ARE OFF



ocean

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MENTAL KOMBAT

After Japan and USA representatives did battle last month, the contest moves to central Europe this issue, as two nations famous for their footballing encounters come together. *Das offizielle PlayStation* takes on *Ufficiale PlayStation*. It's Italy vs Germany in a meeting of PlayStation minds...



Name: Giorgio Baratta **Job:** Editor of the *Ufficiale PlayStation Magazine* **Favourite games:** Famous for the r-word, lempers and good books, one out of two isn't bad, Italian station Giorgio takes a decent scrap and names *Tekken 2* as his favourite fighting game.



Name: Michael Schmittner **Job:** Editor of the *Offiziell PlayStation Magazine* **Favourite games:** With ruthless efficiency, Herr Schmittner reeled off a list of his favourite games and the score *Tomb Raider 2* sat at the top of that list.

We predict...
that next month's top 10 selling games will look like this. What do you reckon? If you can get any closer to the final 10 than this, with your guess, then we'll send you whichever game is at number one. Answers on a postcard to the usual address, labelled 'Top 10'.

- 1. (NE) *F1 97*
- 2. (1) *V-Rally*
- 3. (NE) *Active Golf 2*
- 4. (2) *ISS Pro*
- 5. (NE) *Oddworld*
- 6. (1) *GI Interactive*
- 7. (2) *Tomb Raider*
- 8. (NE) *Int'l Truck & Field*
- 9. (1) *Worms*
- 10. (NE) *Lost World*
- 11. (NE) *Ridge Racer Rev*
- 12. (NE) *Ridge Racer Rev*

| QUESTIONS | GIORGIO | MICHAEL |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Who is developing <i>Grand Theft Auto</i> ? | DMA 1/1 | DMA 1/1 |
| 2. Who is the film star in <i>Apocalypse</i> ? | Bruce Willis 1/1 | Bruce Willis 1/1 |
| 3. What is the lead character in <i>Nightmare Creatures</i> called? | Nadia 1/1 | Nadia 1/1 |
| 4. What have <i>Depth</i> and <i>Rapid Racer</i> got in common? | They're both water-based games 1/1 | Water 1/1 |
| 5. Which game features the Shinra Corporation? | <i>Final Fantasy VII</i> 1/1 | <i>Final Fantasy VII</i> , of course 1/1 |
| 6. <i>Dark Omen</i> is the latest in which series of games? | <i>Warhammer</i> 1/1 | The <i>Warhammer</i> series 1/1 |
| 7. What is Rosco McQueen's job? | A fireman 1/1 | He's a fireman 1/1 |
| 8. Elums, Sligs and Scrabs appear in what? | <i>Oddworld</i> 1/1 | <i>Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee</i> 1/1 |
| 9. What sort of game is <i>Dynasty Warriors</i> ? | A fighting game 1/1 | A beat 'em up 1/1 |
| 10. Who is publishing <i>Judge Dredd</i> ? | Gremlin 1/1 | Gremlin 1/1 |

VERDICT

10 - A thought to go from the mind to mind. A performance faced with Latin flame.

10 - A perfect German efficiency from Michael. A perfect 10 again.

QuizStation



So much for the efforts of our Tonic and Latin friends... Surely the plucky Englishman can match them? So think of our green and pleasant lands, pull on those Union Jack boxer shorts and show a pride in our tiny is and by answering a number of questions about Italy and Germany. Go on, you might win some PlayStation goodies.

Answers on a POSTCARD to:
QuizStation 25, *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Entries to us by October 30.

The questions

- 1) Name five types of pasta.
- 2) Who is the Prime Minister of Germany?
- 3) Name Chelsea's three Italian international footballers.
- 4) What is the capital of Germany?
- 5) What colours is the German flag made up of?
- 6) What is Italian for 'Hello'?

Answers to Mental Kombat
1) DMA, 2) Bruce Willis, 3) Nadia, 4) Water, 5) *Final Fantasy VII*, 6) *Warhammer*, 7) A fireman, 8) *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*, 9) Beat 'em up, 10) Gremlin.

SONY



NAMCO

IT'S NOT FLIGHT SIMULATION, IT'S FLIGHT STIMULATION.



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My day starts at 7am, when my boneshaker of an alarm clock abuses the silence. The first job is to walk our resident guard dogs, Beau and Tash, who can reduce any would-be intruder to scraps of bone and gristle in seconds, although they're just big fluffy bunny rabbits to me. By 8 o'clock I'm back, but I'm still not really thinking about the day ahead yet. My train of thought is on things like how disgusting Coco Pops taste straight after you've cleaned your teeth.

At 9am I'll meet Frank, my assistant manager, and Richard, the technical support manager - we've all got fancy titles - outside the shop in Luton town centre, and we'll open up. The first conversation of the day will involve bullshitting each other about the high scores we achieved on various games the night before, then we'll move on to something important, like how crap Luton Town are playing recently. With the exception of Fridays (which is new release day, in time for the weekend shoppers) things are pretty quiet for the first hour or so, which is handy because the most important job each morning is to sort out all the mail-order game exchanges. The amount of exchanges can vary - on a good day there'll be 50, on a bad day, as little as 10.



Lead singer in a pop group? International man of mystery? Film star? Footballer? Male model? No, it's Geoff Knox, owner and founder of 101 Computer Games.

WORK, REST, AND PLAYSTATION

ON THE JOB



The way an exchange works is that people will see one of our adverts and phone up to find out more. I'll let them know about prices and availability of games over the phone, and I'll send them our price list - this details how much we charge for exchanges on which games. I grade the games myself, based on the demand for the title, how old it is, and its quality. They're graded from five stars down to one, and if you do a straight swap of a five star title for another five-star title it'll cost a fiver. For very grade you jump, it then costs an additional £4. About eight out of ten enquiries are five star for five-star swaps. Five-star games include *Crash Bandicoot* and *Sim City 2000* because they're so easy to shift, and things like *Tiger Shark* because it's new and not yet widespread. Something like *Tomb Raider*, though, is only four stars because there are so many copies out there. So if you swap your *Tiger Shark* for a copy of *Tomb Raider* it'll only cost you £4. We normally decide on the order over the phone, then they'll send us the game and we'll swap it by return of post.

After the exchanges are sorted there's the more mundane tasks to deal with, like sorting out the advertising and paying the bills, balanced by interesting stuff like writing articles and games charts for local and national press.

Geoff Knox is the owner and founder of Luton-based 101 Computer Games, a mail order company which has just opened its own premises. He used the money that he and his fiancée had saved for their wedding to start the business. Let's hope it works out, for his sake.

Unfortunately, one thing there is rarely time for is playing games all day, which I find strange because Frank and Richard always seem to manage it. I don't have a lunch break as such - just a quick scoff from a much-maligned fast food restaurant beginning with 'Mc'.

The afternoons fly by, as I spend most of it serving customers, taking telephone orders and dealing with enquiries. Mostly it'll be people asking when games are coming out and what stock is available. If it does go quiet, then I'll test out a game or two, because customers misguidedly value my opinion on new games. Unless something is unanimously and universally acknowledged as being the pits, though, I won't impose my opinions on anyone. We have three TVs in the shop, so it's usually okay for customer to try out a game for themselves before they buy it.

I know my games reasonably well as I'm 30 and have always been interested in them - I've occasionally lost interest, but when the

PlayStation came out I became addicted again. It was then that I found a hole in the market which people weren't filling. So I persuaded my fiancée to let me use the money we'd been saving for our wedding for the last three years would be on setting me up in business. I spent three months buying up as much stock as I could, and then started the mail order company. I took the office as possible at home, and so a while later I opened up the shop.

On Saturdays the shop is packed. I spend all day serving and helping. Saturday night is when I let my hair down. It's a curry with my friends, a few cans with mates. There's a few pubs in the town, although the nightclubs are full of people. It's Monday and away we go again. But I wouldn't swap it for anybody - I really enjoy it.



He's skinny. He wears a loincloth. He has no weapons.
(He's the guy that you play.)

Meet the Odd

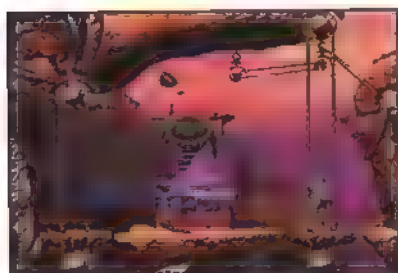


Walk. Talk. Feel. Hide. Think. And take on the ugliest bunch of carnivorous crustaceans this side of a baboon's butt in a new kind of game and a brave new world of interaction.

From slave laborer at Rapture Farms to Liberator of

the Mudokon. It can all be yours. That is, if you can make it through the most inexplicably challenging gameplay in the known universe.

Communicate with real characters. But, not in some cardboard RPG. Blow away your enemies. But not in some



don't get mad; get elum



between a paramite and a hard place



possession is 9/10ths of the law

They're against you.



one-dimensional shooter. Solve wicked situations and
wicked enemies. But, not in some wallpaper puzzle game.
ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE takes every game genre

you've ever seen and blends them into one seamless
surreal, sensory overload of pure gaming. So take your
loinclothed butt and claim your destiny. Salvation. Or salami.

ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE



ODDWORLD
INHABITANTS



GT Interactive
Software

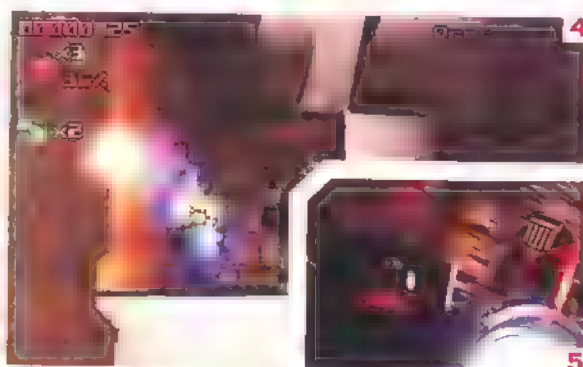
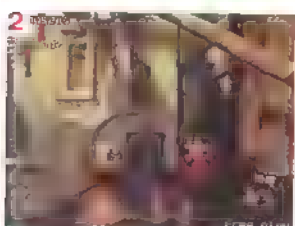
Primal Screen

The section in which *PSM* takes a first look at some of the new PlayStation titles coming soon and predicts which games will be worth the wait...

JUDGE DREDD

'Cool, fast, and rock hard'

(1) Those of you who have wobbled the corridors of *Loaded* will recognise the fabulous explosions. **(2)** The game is set in Mega City One, home of Judge Dredd. The bloke's even got his own comic. **(3)** The game scrolls automatically, taking you to the heart of the action. **(4)** Gremlin promise it's going to be real 'adrenaline rush'. **(5)** The moment we all Dredd!



Style: Shoot 'em up
Publisher: Gremlin
Developer: In-house
Release date: November

There was that bit in *Die Hard Trilogy* where you could use a gun. Then came *Area 52*. Another gun game. And we're all terribly excited about *Time Crisis*, Namco's coin-op smash, but hey, Gremlin could be about to usurp the lot of 'em with their licensed *Judge Dredd* game. Rubber bullets? Not according to producer Steve Zalud...

Describe your game in 100 words. Well, it's set in Mega City One and is a faithful recreation of Dredd's world. The story unfolds as you play the game, so I'm not

going to give the plot away now. What you have to do is light your way through hundreds of bad guys, androids and auto weaponry to get to the head honcho. Your weapon of choice? A lawgiver and its multitudinous variations of ammo. Believe me, you'll need every bit of help you can get. Dredd's world is not an easy one to live in. As David Bishop, editor of

2000AD, said, 'This is one of best things that can have happened to *Judge Dredd* - a game that captures the true spirit of Dredd and 2000AD'. Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other? What makes *Judge Dredd* stand head and shoulders above the crowd is the precise recreation of detail. The graphics team have worked long and hard to draw the player into the gameworld, and the music and sound department have been especially inventive, creating a fully layered, ambient realism which really adds depth to the experience.

What other games have influenced *Judge Dredd*?

We started from scratch with this game, looking at a number of different technologies to get the most from the PlayStation, some seen before and some totally original. We wanted to make something distinct yet extremely playable. Many other games look good and some play well, but few of them succeed in drawing you in while managing to retain the 'pick-up-and-play' aspects that *Judge Dredd* has. It's all down to 'well-researched originality'.

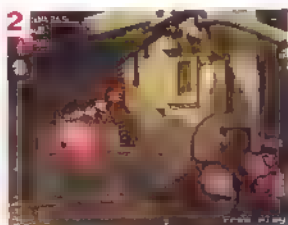
What's going to be the best bit of the game?

I think it's probably the adrenaline



(1) Fifty nine per cent accuracy. Not bad, actually. **(2)** 'Aim for the kneecaps', said the Gremlin chap.

primal screen



(1) Cunningly, Gremlin is aware that SCEE is packaging *Time Crisis* with a gun. The Namco gun will also work with *Judge Dredd*. (2) David Bishop, editor of comic *2000AD*, reckons this game is the best thing that could've happened to *Dredd*. (3) Duck, dodge, fire. (4) The enemy has vehicles.

...a in and fear is a
...nation. Nothing has
...ed without a reason,
...as dynamic pacing and
...detail.

...t be better than any other
...e or ts lik?

...her games in the
...genre, but none of them
...her the feel and
...of *Judge Dredd*. It's like
...itself cool, fast, and

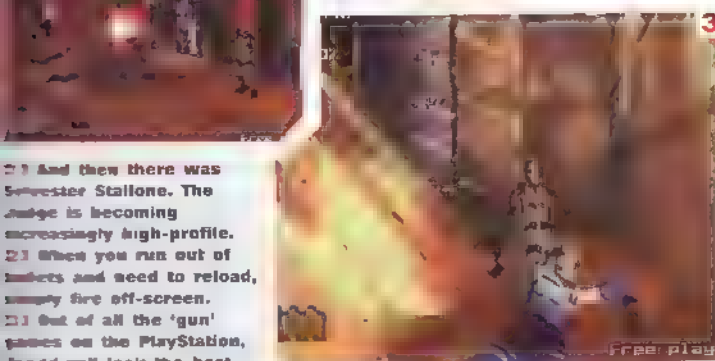
...specific technical innovations
...e or ts lik?

...seen anything on the
...that looks like this?
...held the record for data

throughput for a while, 10-camera
motion capture, gigabytes and
gigabytes of processing (our poor
SG's are going to be put out to
study after this), self-refining,
differential streamed compression,
all stuck in 2Mb? Technica-
innovations? No, not one. And for
our next track.

What's the pedigree of the team?
They're all very well bred, but
the smaller ones are prone to
knee trouble

Why should anyone care about
your game?
Like all earthly pleasures,
there are some things that
people just want



(1) And then there was
Sylvester Stallone. The
Judge is becoming
increasingly high-profile.
(2) When you run out of
bullets and need to reload,
simply fire off-screen.
(3) Out of all the 'gun'
games on the PlayStation,
Judge will look the best.





(1) Even though Ocean's UEFA-licensed football game is a way off being finished, the visuals are already impressive. (2) Expect big, detailed players and coin-op style gameplay. (3) There are 17 different stadia.

UEFA SOCCER

Paris match of the day

Style: Football sim
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: Power And Magic
Release date: First quarter of '98

And everyone's giving 150 per cent. Yes, software companies across the world are producing simulations of football for our edification. Next year sees the World Cup in France and we'll be showered with the fellows. Power And Magic hail from France, and they may just have the main contender....

So, what sort of footie game is UEFA going to be? First and foremost, it will be an arcade experience. Power And Magic [PAM] are big fans of Sega's Virtua Striker coin-op, so they're producing a game with huge, detailed polygonal players. The nearest game to compare it with to date is Konami's ISS Pro - not a bad starting point. All the international teams from around Europe are present and correct

(plus the likes of Argentina and Brazil for good measure), so with the UEFA licence, expect to see all the 'real' players. The Alanis of Green (Radio Five Live, and Hansen (Match of the Day) have been signed up for the commentary which at least gives it a head start on ISS in pundit terms.

But there are already loads of football games, aren't there? Well, yes, but Ocean have got the UEFA licence and they're the main governing body in Europe. Look what the FIFA licence has done for EA. Their footie games sell loads and they aren't even that good

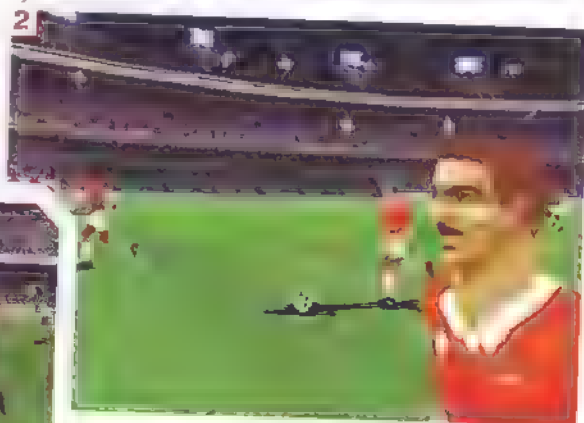
...imagine what a GOOD game with a licence could do. PAM's game is already looking pretty natty and they're a way off finishing it yet. Expect to see more frames of animation than any of its rivals, fully texture mapped 3D polygons and 17 different stadiums. Five massive new stadiums, and two training pitches.

Is there anything in it we haven't seen before?

The producers insist that gameplay always comes first, and rightly so. But they've spent an age working on the motion capture techniques to ensure that the players don't run like cartoon Palmer heading for the lavatory. Also, unlike many football games we've seen, the players are



(1) Each player has over 20 moves he can perform. (2) PAM used a Marseille player for the motion capture.



(1) These socks look pink, don't they? Not good. (2) Expect all the 'real' players to be in the game.



(1) Power And Magic have signed up Radio Five Live's Alan Green to do the commentary and Alan Hansen from *Match of the Day* to provide the commentary. (2) All the international teams in Europe will be represented and some of the bigger non-European sides like Brazil and Argentina. (3) Is it Arsenal or Norway? (4) Kicking about in a lower-league stadium.



worked on titles such as *Jurassic Park 2*, *Mr Nutz* and *Fade To Black*.

Why should anyone care about this? Everyone must have a footie game for the PlayStation by now...

There's a genuine belief here that PAM have all the right ingredients for a great football game. Sure, we've all seen the half-arsed attempts – the *Player Managers*, the *All-Star Soccers* and the *Kick Off '97s* – but *UEFA Soccer* looks like the real deal. Visually, it could scale the heights of *ISS Pro*, and if PAM mix the ingredients just right, who knows...



to kick and head the ball rather than stick their thumbs in the vague direction of the sphere and watch it fly.

Any influences to speak of?

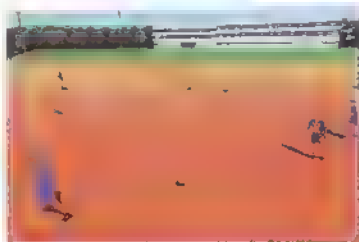
The aforementioned *Virtua Striker* tops the list when it comes to the visual elements that the game is capable of with the out-and-out quality of a game like *Sensei*.

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

Probably the actual fluidity of the gameplay, the freedom to knock the ball around the football the way you want, like in *Sensible Soccer*. For all *ISS's* success, there is a certain limit to what you can do with the attention to detail in the motion capture will ensure that the players in *UEFA Soccer* move like the real thing. Each player has over 20 personal attributes such as speed, skill, agility, perception.

What's the pedigree of the team?

They haven't been around for long, but the people on the team (some of them are experienced. President of the game, founder and general manager, and members of the team have



Two of the game's 17 stadia are all-weather training pitches.

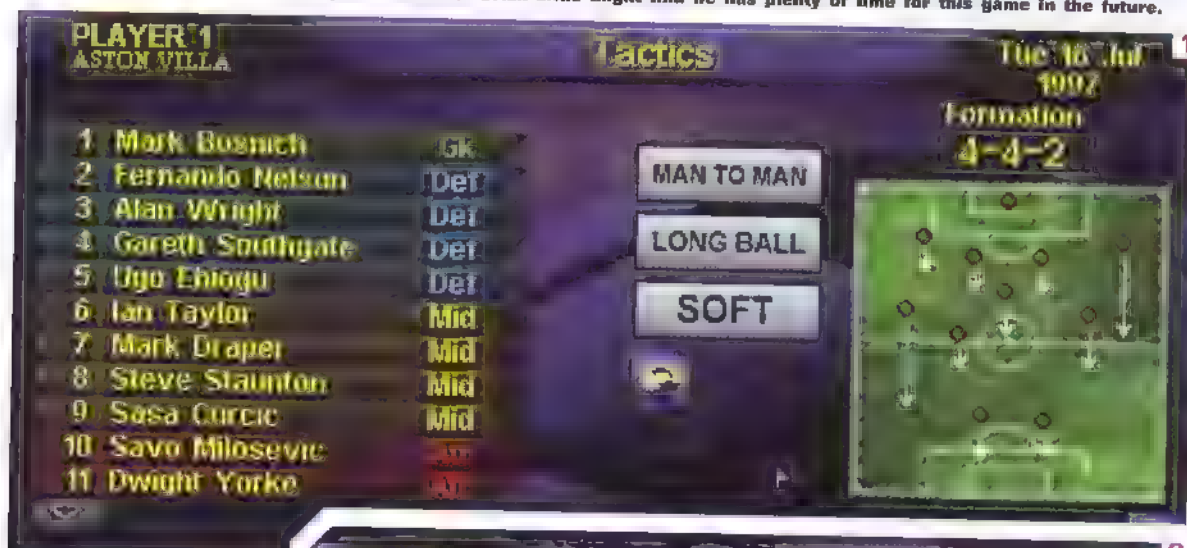
EAGS THE WACKY BUS

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PREMIER MANAGER '98

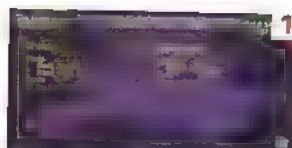
Actua Statto

(1) Ah, the once formidable Aston Villa defence. All those who purchased Villa defenders in the Fantasy League must be gutted. (2) Successful managers plan ahead. (3) Brian Little might find he has plenty of time for this game in the future.

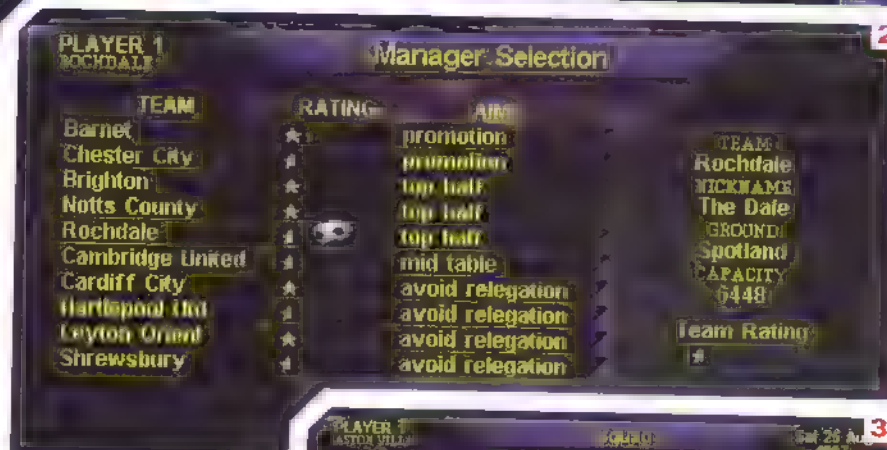


Style: Football management
Publisher: Gremlin
Developer: In house
Release date: December

Not a week goes by without a bulging postbag of letters wailing about the dearth of football management games on the PlayStation. Sure, there was *Player Manager*, but it wasn't anything to write home about. Gremlin have been pumping out the great *Premier Manager* series of games for years, and now they've got round to producing one for the world's biggest console. Take it away, producer (and Leeds fanatic) Bill Newsham...



(1) Europe beckons for the successful club manager. We always do so well, don't we? (2) 'Notts' Forest? Phew, Forest fans aren't going to like that. Still, if Chettle goes...



Tell us about the game, Bill. It's a rollercoaster through the career of a football manager. You get to experience all the ups and downs involved in running a professional football club. Whether it's Brighton or Manchester United, you'll go through the whole range of emotions as you try and steer your chosen side away from pitfalls, such as relegation and financial ruin, into the utopia that is promotion and the possible winning of silverware. At the start of your career, you're offered the option to train the team, train and buy players, act as an accountant and just deal with the finances, or have God-like total control over the running of the club. You need to



earn about training players, which players to buy, when and how to buy them, negotiate contracts, boost team morale and even sort out the floodlights and ensure there are sufficient toilet facilities for the fans.

Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other?

The new Actua Soccer 2 engine will allow you to view the highlights of the matches as they happen, or you can watch the whole game unfold before your very eyes.

How have you got over the fact that management games have always required a keyboard? We've got around this by designing

PLAYER 1
ASTON VILLA

League Cup
Round 1 Leg 2

Sat 15 Sep 1997

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|------------------|--------|
| Aston Villa | 2 | 3 | Bournemouth | aggr |
| Nottingham Forest | 1 | 3 | Brentford | aggr |
| Birmingham | 0 | 6 | Burnley | aggr |
| Preston | 3 | 2 | Cardiff United | aggr |
| Plymouth | 2 | 0 | Doncaster Rovers | aggr |
| Scunthorpe Utd | 4 | 3 | Exeter City | aggr |
| Gillingham | 2 | 1 | Fulham | e-time |
| Wycombe Wanderers | 1 | 2 | Grimsby | aggr |
| Wigan Athletic | 0 | 1 | Hartlepool Utd | aggr |
| Blackpool | 0 | 3 | Leyton Orient | aggr |
| Walsall | 1 | 4 | Luton | aggr |
| Scarborough | 6 | 0 | Manstead | aggr |

(1) Good result for Burnley, eh? The good old League Cup is still a route to Wembley for the minnows. (2) All-action stuff in the Champions League, then. (3) Back to domestic life.

PLAYER 2
ASTON VILLA

League Table

Sat 14 Sep 1997

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Super League GROUP 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 100 |
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Lee Garnett
LEEDS UNITED

English Premier League

Sat 20 Dec 1997

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Derby County | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 100 |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|

no use icons. We thought this might be a problem initially but when it came down to it we realised that you don't really need a board.

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

The best bit will be when Leeds win the league. Not very likely, but you never know. Oh, and expect the in-game action and highlights to be very impressive, too.

Why will it be better than any other game on the market?

For a start there's only one other game on the PlayStation (Anco's *Player Manager*). There's definitely a dearth of management games for the machine, so after ours hopefully there won't be a need for any more.

Any specific technical innovations to speak of?

It's got to be the *Actua Soccer 2* engine which is implemented in the game. Mightily impressive.

What's the pedigree of the team?

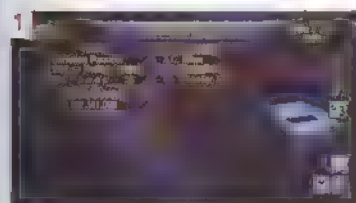
We're all God-fearing Dewsbury lads who follow Leeds United. We like a few ales on a Saturday night, enjoy playing video and studying ballroom dancing techniques. We hope that the release of *PM '98* will lead to world peace and we celebrate the fact that one of us is the Dewsbury & District All-comers Draughts Champion.

Why should anyone care about your game?

Because there are thousands of football fanatics out there who own PlayStation and have been waiting for a decent management sim for years. Well, here it is, lads.

Tell us a secret about the game you've told no one else.

Erm, the only absolute knowledge attainable by mankind is that life is meaningless. It was actually Tony who said that, and he was a big PM fan (a legend, in fact).



Lee Garnett
LEEDS UNITED

League Table

Sat 20 Dec 1997

English Premier League

| Team | P | W | D | L | F | A | P |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| Arsenal | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 14 | 4 | 17 |
| Sheffield Wed | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 6 | 17 |
| Wimbledon | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 5 | 16 |
| Leeds United | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 16 | 9 | 16 |
| Liverpool | 7 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 13 |
| Blackburn Rovers | 7 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 12 |
| West Ham | 7 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 |
| Tottenham H | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 10 | 11 |
| Newcastle Utd | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 8 | 11 |
| Everton | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 11 | 10 |

(1) Premier Manager '98 includes the superb *Actua Soccer 2* engine so you can watch the highlights. (2) A good start, but can it last to the bitter end?

PC CD ROM

A TOP DOWN 3D RACER AVAILABLE SOON

CHOOSE YOUR MOTOR CHOOSE

Netorish

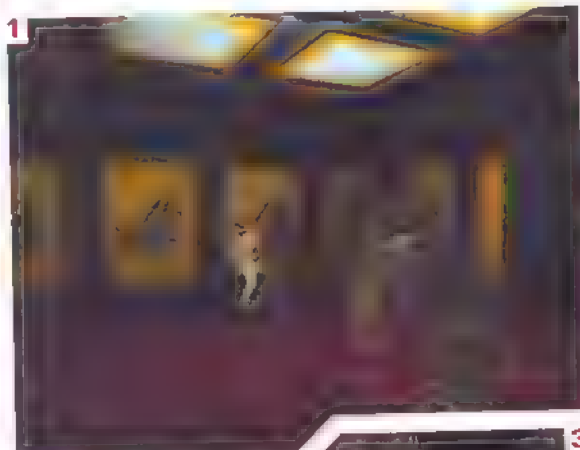
ocean

TECHNICAL



THE FIFTH ELEMENT

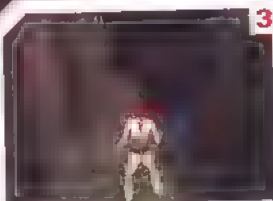
Bruce on the loose



Style: Action adventure
Publisher: TBA
Developer: Kalisto
Release date: March '98

Many felt that Luc Besson's sci-fi film (starring Bruce Willis and Gary Oldman) was a victory of style over substance. But hey, it looked absolutely brilliant. The game of the film is currently being developed by Kalisto, in France (they're doing *Nightmare Creatures*, too, you may recall), so we thought it was about time you knew a little more...

What's it all about, then?
Essentially, *The Fifth Element* is a



3D action adventure set 250 years into the future - the game follows the film's plot quite closely. A comet is rapidly heading towards Earth, bringing with it the promise of untold evil and destruction. Of course, Earth's gathered throng are none too keen to see the comet reach its destination. And there's a very sexy-looking girl involved, too. She's called Leelo and she's the key to the fifth element. Leelo and the gang have to find four ancient stones which they reckon can save the planet. You must complete 15 levels and a slew of sub-missions.

[1] Is this the sci-fi *Tomb Raider* PlayStation gamers everywhere have been awaiting? The 3D action adventure style would suggest it's so. [2] Leelo checks if the comet has arrived in the spare room. [3] Is she Lara with pants?

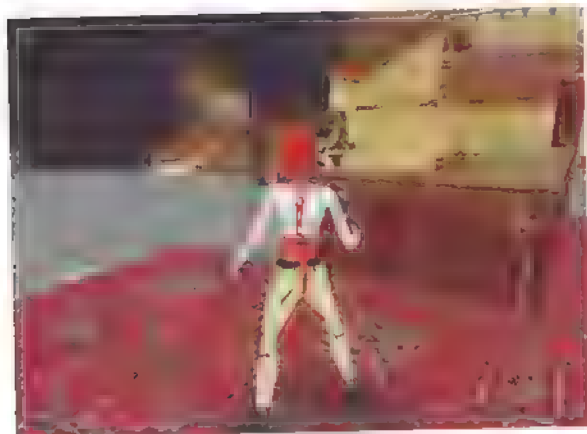


Is there anything here that we've never seen in any other game? Hmm, well, Kalisto worked arm-in-arm with the film's producers, Gaumont, and were even given the opportunity to spend time in the States with the guys who produced the film's special effects, Digital Domain. Even director Luc Besson himself approved of the project. This is likely to be the licensed game which most closely resembles its big screen brother.

What other games have influenced *The Fifth Element*? Obviously, the film itself is the

biggest influence, but expect to see elements of *Tomb Raider*-esque adventure. Also, *Resident Evil* and *Fade To Black* are good reference points. Whether it's a Lara beater remains to be seen.

What's going to be the best bit of the game? Fans of the film will be able to play through levels that were actually cut from the film, which almost certainly has never happened in a licensed game. Look out for a city sewer and a police station. Certainly, this should be a visual wow.



Leelo, played by Milla Jovovich in the film, is one of the characters you can play. You can also play as Dallas.





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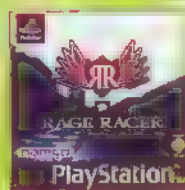
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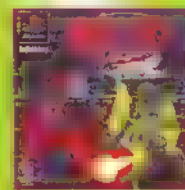
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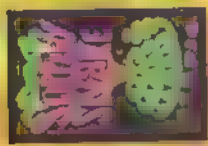
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SONY



feedback

This month, divided opinions over the merits of *V-Rally*, a rapping reproval, and Laramania... the men in love with a silicon chick



V-Good

I've just spent the evening playing *V-Rally* and have finally found THE race game for the PlayStation. Not only is it amazing to look at, with effects yet to be seen on this or any other platform, but the developers have so managed to cram in that 'fun' ingredient we've all been looking for.

I haven't enjoyed driving so much since first earning to powerslide a Dodge Viper around a hairpin turn while playing NFS on the 3DO. Racing games like *Porsche Challenge* and *Rage Racer* have never appealed to me because surely the thrill comes from knowing that pushing for that little extra around a corner also increases the risk of crashing and losing a lap, and not just bouncing off the side to only lose a few tenths of a second.

Where *V-Rally* also excels over other racers is that even though there are only three other competitors, you always feel that you're racing against them rather than playing a game of racing tag where, no matter how well you drive, you'll never meet first place until halfway round the last lap (SCEE and Namco, take note). This is full of great gaming moments, from hurtling towards a tight corner, knowing



BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION?

With regard to *Tomb Raider's* questionable cross-gender appeal, if 96 per cent of your readership are male, is this an approximation of the gender split for the PlayStation market? If the ratios are similar, then it can be assumed that at least 96 per cent of the hype surrounding the buxom Lara Croft has come from lusty young males. But what of the remaining approximated four per cent of female PlayStation owners? Certainly the opinions of these relative few would be dwarfed by the general male consensus. Whatever the female comments concerning the playability and Lara's commendable 'get-on-with-it' attitude, would they be heard over the testosterone-fueled roar concerning Lara's chest?

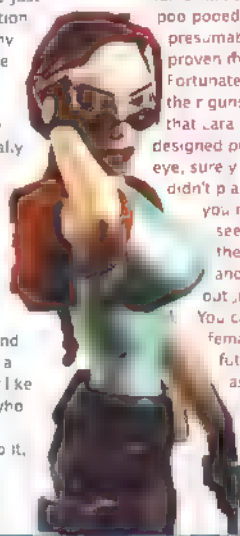
Fair enough, Lara's action attitude is hardly different from any of her male counterparts. Isn't she just a normal run of the mill action hero with breasts? If so, why the hell not? It's good to see a female character facing such narrative odds and enemies in such an intense game. It gives the statistically few female gamers a character that for once they can empathise with and therefore enjoy the game more. It makes a pleasant change and I'm certain that because of this and the superb standard of this game play and graphics, *Tomb Raider* has a certain uniqueness. Rather like those of the 'gentler sex' who own PlayStation.

When it comes down to it, all sides agree that it's a fantastic game and if Lara

were real, she would have many attributes which could be admired and envied by both sexes (I don't know many people who are physically able to pull themselves up on a ledge into a handstand, let alone with such an ample bosom). But essentially, she is more than just a token female and little more than a computer character. Role model or female icon of the Nineties? Perhaps not, but then so few of us spend our weekends running around in ancient tombs being mauled by beasts and swimming around in stagnant water. And not once does Lara mention her bruises, broken nails or ask if she looks fat in those shorts.

Debs Hockey,
Norwich

Interestingly, the original idea for *Tomb Raider's* female lead was rather poo-pooed by some at Core Design, presumably because it wasn't a proven means of selling games. Fortunately the designers stuck to the r guns. But even if one imagines that Lara as a character wasn't designed purely to please the male eye, surely it'd be naive to suggest it didn't play a major part. However, as you rightly suggest, it's great to see a female character taking the lead in such an important and influential game (check out Jill in *Resident Evil*, too). You can expect many more female protagonists in the future because of Lara. And as our reviewer said 'there is no other game that has ever given you so much of the sensation of "being the main character"'. And he's male.



that to gain first place you have to go that little bit faster and risk clipping the corner, crashing and crawling in fourth, to nudging the tail of your mate's car only to see him go spinning off into the undergrowth.

There are a couple of questions, though. Where's the tyre selection? And has the steering been toned down, as yourself and other magazines made a major point about this and yet I didn't seem to have much trouble with it?

Finally, anyone thinking of buying a racing game should seriously consider *V-Rally* just for the night sections alone. Infographics have set out their stall and put a game on it which, from now on, all racing games should be measured against.

Ian Grainger,
Alperton

Glad you're enjoying *V-Rally* as much as we are. The sheer depth of the game play and the number of tracks therein make it an essential purchase, as far as we're concerned. Learning to take the cars to their limits is one of the ultimate tests in the game. There were a couple of changes to the version we reviewed, and although some people seem to have been up in arms about it, most are enjoying the game for what it is - the best rally game ever.

An alternative View

After reading your review of *V-Rally*, I rushed out and handed over forty ►



While some may believe *V-Rally* to be an unrewarding racer...

War Gods

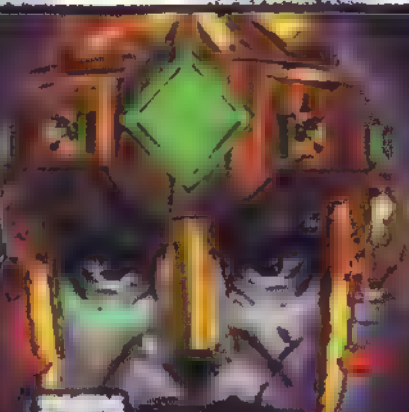
P R E S E N T S
THE ULTIMATE 3D COMBAT



KABUKI JO

FEARED MEDIEVAL SAMURAI

Vs



TAK

AVENGER OF A LOST CIVILISATION



VALLAH

A VIKING GODDESS

Vs



PAGAN

A MISTRESS OF THE BLACK ARTS

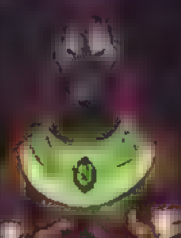
Vs

WARHEAD

A SUPER-HUMAN FIGHTER

CY-5

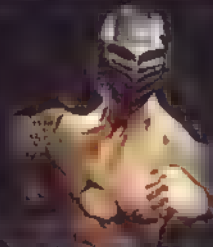
AN ADVANCED CYBORG



ANUBIS

HIS SOUL IS CURSED

Vs



MAXIMUS

A MIGHTY GLADIATOR

Vs

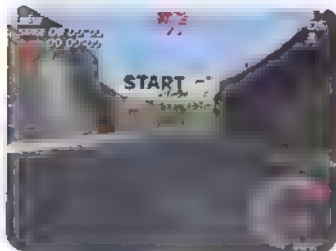
AHAU KIN

AN EVIL HIGH PRIEST

VOODOO

GOD OF THE UNDER





...we'd contest that Infogrames's title is fully deserving of its 9/10 score.

► hard-earned pounds for a copy of what you had led me to believe was the racing game of the year. B.A.L. COCKS, the reviewer's obviously an arse. *V-Rally* is without a doubt the crappiest, most unrewarding racer I have ever played. It's infuriatingly slow - having to brake every few seconds to snail-like speeds is just so annoying - being barged off the track by race-line hugging CPU cars led to many joy-pad-through-screen moments, and why does the co-pilot often only tell you of a corner when you're halfway through negotiating it? *V-Rally* deserves seven points, not nine.

Rally Cross, on the other hand, is simply superb. Admittedly, with the standard pad it's a most uncontrollable, but if like me you buy it with an Analog pad you'll find yourself the proud owner of one of the best racing games of all time, fully deserving NINE POINTS. One criticism of the review, though - where is the alleged tough challenge your reviewer complains of? I consider myself an average games player yet after two days solid play, I've won all the seasons and have gained access to all variations of tracks and all the cars including the 4x4 pick-ups with only minimal effort.

Chris Clarke,
Clevedon

You're entitled to your opinion, Chris, even if your comments are more than a little misguided. If *V-Rally* is without a doubt the crappiest, most unrewarding racer I have ever played then how could you suggest it's worth a seven - a score equivalent to an 'A' in the exam halls of this Far Isle? And believe us, we reckon seven out of 10 is a good score for a game. Names are not offered without a lot of soul searching. What you're basically saying is that you found *Rally Cross* far too easy whereas you couldn't master the rudiments of *V-Rally*. The Infogrames title is by far the superior rally racer so we have to agree to disagree.

Ideas above our 'Station?

I have been reading *PSM* for over a year and have found it to be an enjoyable magazine. I just thought I'd send you some ideas which I think might help improve your demo disc.

1) Before the title screen, you could have an FMV sequence, like the one in SCE's

TAKING THE RAP

Hey! You 'm writ'n' to say
That cos of you, I am happy today!
Bought a copy of your magazine
Just to catch up on the
PlayStation scene
Flipped through, and what
do I find?



Stuff that makes me
think you're outta
your mind.
You mixed up
p x of my gang,
you see
Back in
issue 23
Dude who
draws the
p x must be a bit of
a napper,
E se my name

aint PaRappa The Rapper!
PaRappa The Rapper,
On tour in Central London

Hey Dude, we're sorry 'bout dat
Something te is us
yo smel'ing a rat.
Asked around
(see what we could find
And it just seems like
mo homeboy went mighty blind
But we're telling you dude,
won't happen again
Or dem folk down repro
gonna get it in the brain
Prince F easwal ow and Cheap Cheap
won't swap no more
Because f they do
we're gonna shown 'em
the door!

'DEMO 1' d sc

2) At the title screen, one
would be able to select the
following: games,
video, art work,
download cheats. Yaroze

3) a) Games: here, you would
be able to select the
demos to play. This
section would be the
same as your usual demo.

b) Video: This part would be using the
PlayStation's FMV capabilities. On the
video you could have interviews with
game designers, showing how they put
their games together. This could be like
your feature profiles, but in the form
of a video.

c) Artwork: in this section you'd be able to
access artwork that readers send in. The
pictures would look stunning because of
the PlayStation's high resolution. You
should take a look at the Japanese
PlayStation game, *GunBird*. This game has
some gamers' drawings which look
impressive on the PlayStation.
d) Download cheats: In this section you'd
be able to load info on to your memory
card that you usually get when you reach
a certain level of a game. For example
being able to access secret characters
from *Soul Edge* or *Tekken*.

3) Yaroze: Here you would be able to play
games developed by amateurs on the

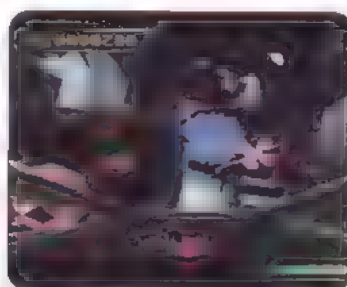
Yaroze. This would encourage gamers to
seriously consider investing in Yaroze.
Anton Heskie,
London

Thanks for the suggestions, Anton.
They're all excellent ideas and some of
them we're gradually going to implement.
In the past couple of months, we've
managed to get hold of 'work in progress'
videos and it's something we'll continue to
feature, albeit not every month. Also, on
next month's CD, we'll be featuring our
first ever game created on the Yaroze - we
haven't seen it ourselves, yet, but it'll be
interesting to see the quality.

The major problems of inputting a
your ideas much as we'd like to, is
the sheer timescale involved. We don't
put together the CD in the office here. The
guys at SCE, in London, are
responsible for it and
they're rushed off their feet
producing demos for a lot of
Europe - please believe us
it's tough enough
compiling the demo CD
every month as it is. An
opening FMV sequence would
need to be changed every
month and these take a lot of time
(and money) to put together. But
hopefully we can continue to improve
the demo CD.



Striking back: PlayStation's appalling second *Star Wars*-related title, *Rebel Assault II*, has been much maligned by *PSM* issue 211 and readers alike.



Rebel's assault on LucasArts

Firstly, congratulations on producing a
top-quality mag, notably the top coverage
of games like *Colony Wars* that are in
production. I hear that Psygnosis are also
producing a new product which takes the
game player through a complex enemy
simulation - it's called *Colony Wars* (goes
on to produce frankly I believe gag
rivaling film star and rodent, readers).

Secondly, the matter of *Rebel Assault*.
I danced about the office when I read
your review. *RA2* was a definite offer from
a company that have yet to prove
themselves on the PlayStation format and
I was happy to see you give it the mark it
deserved. You mentioned that a decent
games player could complete it in about
an hour and 10 minutes. I must be crap
because it took me about one hour and
45! Not being one to sit back, I wrote
LucasArts a letter saying that the game
lacked longevity and gameplay, and
considering the now very sizeable
ownership base of the PlayStation, why
not adapt and release a good title like *Tie
Fighter*? The reply was pro forma, with a
couple of added lines saying 'no plans as
yet' regarding *Tie Fighter* and nothing
about *RA2*.

The one thing that did stick in my
throat about *RA2* was the timing of your
review. Although spot-on in nature, it was
far too late to warn the gaming hordes,
fresh from the tweaked re-screenings of
the trilogy, that the game was no good.
Hence LucasArts' augh all the way to the
bank for not getting the appropriate
'players' financial boycott! Was there any
particular reason that this game took so
long to pass the board's eye?

Dan Keating,
Swindon

We've said it before, and undoubtedly
we'll be saying it again, there
are certain games
that software
companies simply
do not want reviewed
before they
arrive on
the shelves.
If the publishers
realise that a game in
which they've invested

heavily isn't going to be nearly as good as
they'd hoped, the most efficient short-
term tactic is to put it on to the shelves
knowing that people will buy the game
simply because of the *Star Wars* name.
By the time the review comes out - and
quite often, by the time we've realised the
game is in the shops and bought it
ourselves to review - the software
company has had four weeks' worth of
sales, the period in which games sell the
most units. But it only harms their
professional reputation in the long term.

Retail buyers will purchase the units
for big-name titles without review scores
whereas the less well-known games rely
on dubious scores from small magazines
in order that they be stocked in the first
place. Which is why you see mystifying 96
per cent scores in the smaller
magazines for less than-
competent titles. Rant over...



Go island hopping
& jumping
& swimming
& climbing
& swinging
& more

CROC'S GOT THE MOVES!



Croc
LEGEND OF THE GOBBOS

Letters

Q&A, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW



- 1 I'd like some definitive info on *Worms 2*. You said in *PSM23* that there would be no more *Worms* and yet information that I received from Software First told me that there will be. They said that it will be released at the end of March, 1998.
- 2 Could you also tell me anything about *Star Trek* games that are already on the PlayStation, or due out soon?
- 3 Where would you recommend that people get good-quality toys at a low price?
- 4 One last thing, could you tell me which one you recommend out of *V-Rally* and *Rally Cross*?

Matthew Calver,
Scarborough

- 1 *V-Rally* is the better game, in our humble opinion.

- 1 In *F1 '97* will the computer-controlled cars crash out? It was annoying that all the cars finished in the original.
- 2 Will the players in *Actua Tennis* be customised or will Grem in get a licence to use real player names?
- 3 Which leagues will you be able to pick teams from in *Premier Manager '98*?
- 4 Has *Actua Golf 2* got the two courses from the original?
- 5 Do you have any news about the third lot of Platinum range games?



Team 17 are busy working on a sequel to the addictive *Worms*, but don't expect it to appear before mid '98.

- 1 *Worms 2* is currently hanging in the balance because of technical logistics. Steve Hiley, Team 17's PR fellow, reckons that it takes some 16Mb to run on the PC because of the plethora of animations therein. But both SCE and Team 17 are keen to see a PlayStation version. You can forget about March '98 though.
- 2 Interplay's *Star Fleet Academy* is due in the coming months and word has it that MicroProse are also working on a Spocky title.
- 3 Firstly, read our reviews to find out the quality of games. Mail order offers the best prices but check that the game you want is in stock before parting with cash.

- 1 Finally, I thought the index in your birthday issue (*PSM12*) was a brilliant idea. Why don't you do this every issue or every few? Many people are buying PlayStation at the moment and perhaps need you to tell them the good from the bad.

Andrew Dansey,
Orpington

- 1 The CPU cars crash out in the sequel, you'll be pleased to learn.
- 2 Expect to see a certain Mr Rusedski, a Henman and all the other players in the world who're better than them.
- 3 You can play any of the four English leagues - all the real teams and players - and Grem in

are adding the *Actua Soccer 2* engine for the highlights.

- 1 No. There are three real courses and three made up.
- 2 Look out for *Wipeout 2097* and *Adidas Power Soccer* in October. *Destruction Derby 2* will be out in January.
- 3 There's an index in this issue. I probably do it intermittently because it does take up rather a lot of space.

- 1 Will there be a *Destruction Derby 3*?
- 2 Will there ever be a *Little Big Adventure 2* because I've seen shots of Twinsen in rendered sequences?
- 3 Why don't you have more tips and cheats in your mag? You could put some on the demo CD.
- 4 Would you recommend I purchase *Tomb Raider* or *Syndicate Wars*, or should I wait for *Tomb Raider 2*?

Simon Bailey,
Frodsham

- 1 There are no plans for another as yet.
- 2 That'll be the PC version you saw. PlayStation? Hopefully, but Bullfrog haven't announced plans for it yet.
- 3 Simply because primarily we're not a tips mag. We prefer to concentrate our efforts on forthcoming titles. Check out the tips books covermounted on our sister title *PlayStation Power*.
- 4 The first two are great games in the rown right. Buy them. Await next month's review of *Tomb Raider 2*.

- 1 I'm a real *Cool Boarders* fanatic and I think it's the greatest game to hit the PlayStation, though I don't have the game myself because I've heard rumours the sequel's due to be released soon?
- 2 I had *Mario Kart* on the SNES and thought it was a great game. Is there any game out, or soon to be out on the PlayStation other than *Street Racer*. If so, is it any good?
- 3 Finally, is there to be an athletics game which will look better than *Int. Track & Field*?

Martin Howitt,
Sidmouth

- 1 You think it's the greatest game and you haven't got it? Anyway, *Cool Boarders 2* should be a vast improvement on what we consider a rather dull game. Look out also for Ocean's *Snow*

Racer, due for release in the coming weeks.

- 2 It's unlikely that we'll see anything better than *Mario Kart* for a while but we await Teistar's *Wreckin' Crew* - it's the closest we're going to get.
- 3 Not in the near future. The Olympics are usually the time when we see a rash of such games.



- 1 Is the Analog pad compatible with *F1*, *Cool Boarders* and *Adidas Power Soccer*?
- 2 What's the difference between the Analog pad and the normal pad? What do the little analog controls do?

Ben Attfield,
Haddenham

- 1 It isn't compatible with those titles but SCE have made a directive that the pad should be compatible with all applicable games by the end of the year.
- 2 Essentially, the Analog pad gives you greater freedom of movement whereas a digital (normal) pad offers only a limited number of directions you can move. The Analog sticks do the same job as the D-pad, only with infinite movement options.

- 1 The demo of *Oddworld* was great. How many hours of gameplay are there in the full game?
- 2 Have you any idea what the plot is going to be for *Broken Sword 2*?
- 3 I already own the first *F1*. Is it worth getting the sequel?

Lewis Gillard,
Bradford

- 1 The levels are huge - we haven't finished it but we reckon that if you complete all the puzzles you could be taking over 30 hours and then some.
- 2 Yeah, it involves an ancient civilisation called the Mayans who were real yin-yo astrologers and predicted that the world will end in 2012. There's also archaeology and smuggling - check out page 54 for the preview.
- 3 Yes, yes, yes.

- 1 Are there any PlayStation

games where you play the part of a police officer? Are there any plans to bring any out?

- 2 Are there any RPCs other than *Swikoden* which are available for the PA. PlayStation? What would you recommend?
- 3 What about flight sims?
- 4 Adventures?

Andrew Crate,
Stevenage

- 1 *Die Hard Trilogy*, *G-Police* to name but two. But there are loads where you play the part of an agent or some kind of operative.
- 2 *Vandal-Hearts*, *Legacy Of Kain* and *Sentient*. Look out for *Final Fantasy VII* in the next couple of months.
- 3 What about them? *Air Combat*, *Thunderhawk 2*, *Top Gun* to name a few. But they tend to nod towards action rather than out and out flight sim.
- 4 *Tomb Raider*, *Broken Sword*, *Excalibur 2525*, gosh there's loads. Read the magazine good fellow.

When *Croc* comes out on the PlayStation will it need an Analog pad like *Mario 64*? When's *Croc* due out?

Patrick Connor,
Stockport

You can use both the Analog pad and the normal pad for *Croc*. *Mario 64* was specifically designed for the N64 pad. Lmao, don't expect *Croc* to be anywhere near as good as *Joe Blow* from Teistar, though. Turn to page 101 for our full review.

- 1 When will *Air Race*, *Touring Car Championship* and *Fighting Force* be released?

- 2 Is the steering wheel and foot pedals compatible with *V-Rally*, *Grand Theft Auto* and *Rapid Racer*?

- 3 Is it possible to play *Time Crisis* without a gun?

- 4 Will Namco's *GunCoi* be compatible with *Die Hard Trilogy*?

Robert Gordon,
Hatfield

- 1 They're all due for an October release.

- 2 It should work with *V-Rally*, unlike with *Rapid Racer* and certainly not in *GTA*.

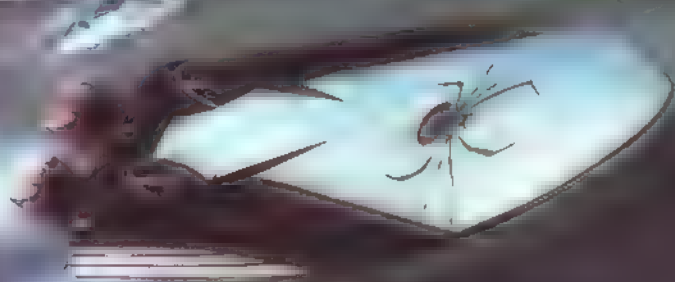
- 3 No. SCE will be packaging the gun with the game - expect a retail price of around £60.

- 4 It's exceptionally unlikely, being that the gun is specifically designed for *Time Crisis*.



SO FAST IT'LL MAKE YOU SICK.

Incredible effects. Non-stop turbulence. Surging waves. And that's just your stomach.

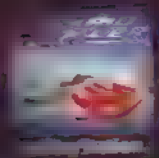


RAPID RACER

THE ULTIMATE POWER BOAT RACE

SOUNDTRACK BY APOLLO FOUR FORTY.

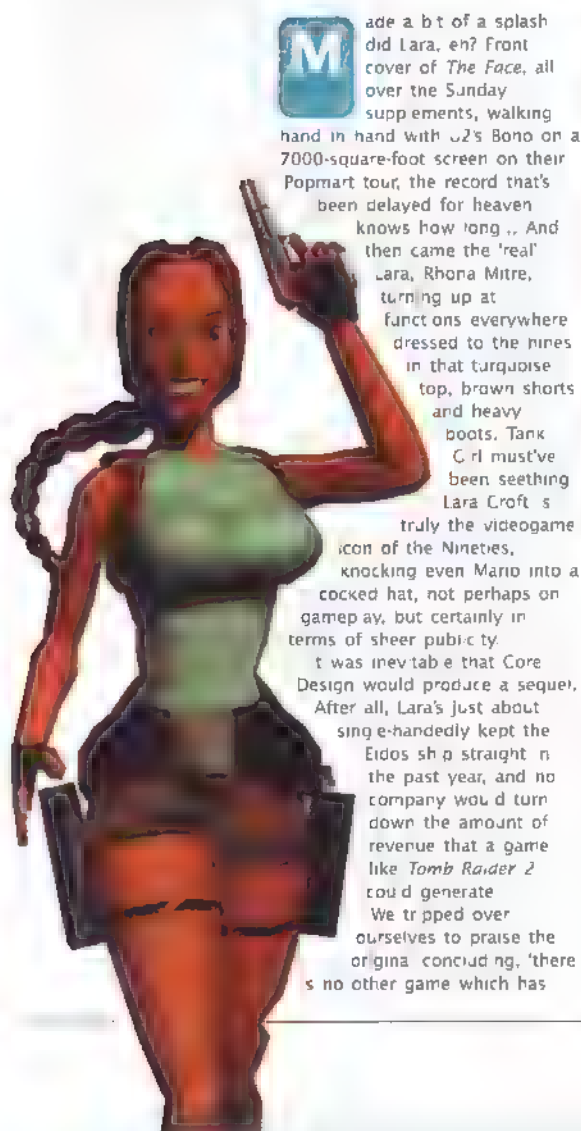
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PrePlay Tomb Raider 2



Inevitably, Core's sequel is the most eagerly awaited game of the year. Almost as eagerly awaited as next month's issue, which carries a playable demo and an exclusive review...



Made a bit of a splash did Lara, eh? Front cover of *The Face*, all over the Sunday supplements, walking hand in hand with U2's Bono on a 7000-square-foot screen on their Popmart tour, the record that's been delayed for heaven knows how long... And then came the 'real' Lara, Rhona Mitre, turning up at functions everywhere dressed to the nines in that turquoise top, brown shorts and heavy boots. Tank Girl must've been seething. Lara Croft is truly the videogame icon of the Nineties, knocking even Mario into a cocked hat, not perhaps on gameplay, but certainly in terms of sheer publicity. It was inevitable that Core Design would produce a sequel. After all, Lara's just about single-handedly kept the Eidon ship straight in the past year, and no company would turn down the amount of revenue that a game like *Tomb Raider 2* could generate. We tripped over ourselves to praise the original, concluding, 'there's no other game which has

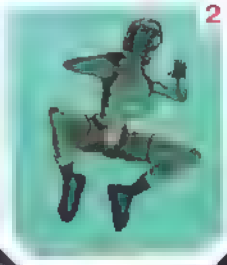
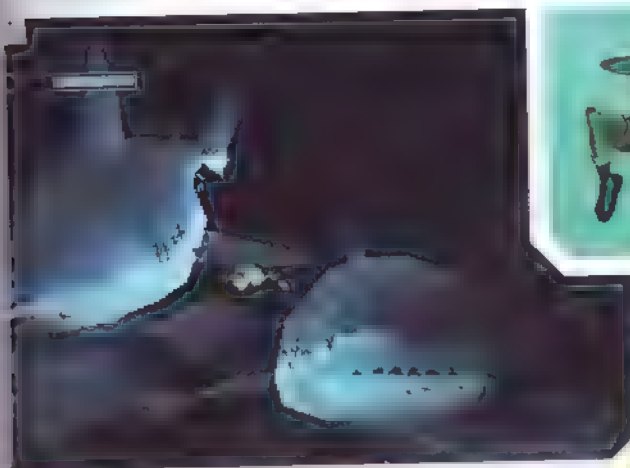


[1] Core Design are equipping Lara with a more comprehensive wardrobe for the sequel. [2] Can't think of the name? [3] And the enemies are tough.

given you so much sensation of "being" the main character *Tomb Raider* is the sort of thoroughly adult entertainment that the PlayStation needs and deserves'. But could a sequel ever produce such a gushing homage? Sure, Mario developed three dimensions but he developed over different systems. The PlayStation Lara arrived on is the same PlayStation we'll be playing *Tomb Raider 2* on. But Core Design's Operations Director, **Adrian Smith**, is confident that the team have enhanced the

original. 'Lara will have more freedom to explore in *TR2*', he explains. 'This is given to her in the new climbing move. She can climb hand over hand as well as side-to-side, so instead of looking for ledges to jump up to and making a bee-line for those, she'll have to be looking for hand-holds in the sides of cliffs or other objects that look as if they can be scaled. Once she starts to climb up the walls, she can then move across to the left or to the right to access further areas of the map. And we'll have the

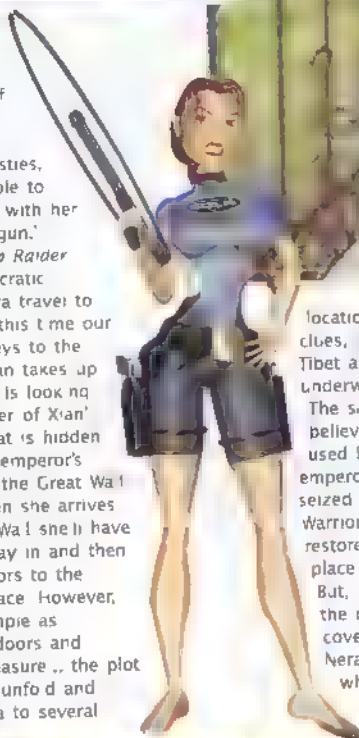
| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Eidos | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | Core Design | ■ STYLE: | 3D adventure |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | November | ■ PLAYERS: | One |



2 [1] But does Lara Croft swim with the fishes? Core have introduced underwater sequences this time. [2] Here she is doggy paddling, earlier. [3] Donning traditional outfit in Venetian setting.

underwater combat working in TR2 instead of swimming like hell from the underwater nasties. Lara will be able to shoot at them with her new harpoon gun.'

While *Tomb Raider* saw the aristocratic adventurer Lara travel to darkest Peru, this time our heroine journeys to the Far East. Adrian takes up the tale. 'Lara is looking for 'The Dagger of Xian' an artefact that is hidden in an ancient emperor's palace within the Great Wall of China. When she arrives at The Great Wall she'll have to find her way in and then locate the doors to the emperor's palace. However, it's not as simple as opening the doors and taking the treasure... the plot will begin to unfold and will send Lara to several



locations in search of clues, including Venice, Tibet and a sunken underwater shipwreck.' The said dagger is believed to have been used by a tyrannical emperor before it was seized by Tibetan Warrior monks and restored to its rightful place at The Great Wall. But, in a cunning twist the dagger is also coveted by the Frima Nera, a cult group who worship its mythical powers

'Once she starts to climb up the walls, she can then move across to the left or to the right to access further areas...'

But we digress. What's Lara Croft going to be wearing when she's looking for the blessed dagger? Core have actually given Lara a number of outfits this time around, so she'll get a change of costume depending on which location she's in. Lara is a so made of more polygons, so she moves with greater fluidity - her pony tail will be swishing come November. Calm down.

Perhaps the most significant addition, though, is the added variety in the locations to which Lara travels. Amazingly, Lara never actually ventured outside in the last instalment. Core have ▶



[1] Lara will be able to climb hand-over-hand in the sequel, so she'll be able to scale cliffs. [2] Always time for sightseeing - one of the joys of the original was the exploration factor. [3] Lara's in search of the Dagger of Xian.



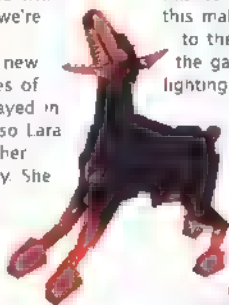
PrePlay | Tomb Raider 2



(1) Lara still has to dispatch a welter of pesky creatures who're not enamoured by her presence. (2) 'Real' Lara, Rhona Mitra, doesn't have to do this. She has suffer the attentions of programmers at trade shows, though. (3) The boys are back in town. (4) A boh, a weave and a couple of bullets. (5) A battle in Venice.

'Lara will encounter far more human baddies in TR2, though, so you can expect a lot more action...'

► been spending a great deal of time and effort on the game's lighting, as Adrian explains. 'The new lighting effects will distinguish *Tomb 2* from *Tomb 1*. Lara will be equipped with a flare in TR2, and we're going to base a few puzzles around this new element. Some stages of the game will be played in complete darkness, so Lara will have to rely of her flare to light the way. She can throw the flare wherever she likes even down dark shafts to see what dangers lurk below – and it even works underwater', he enthuses. 'Dynamic lighting also means that



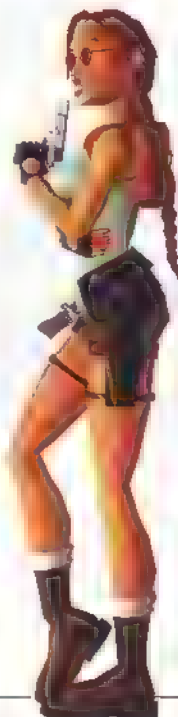
we can get really great gun flashes each time Lara shoots this makes a massive difference to the overall atmosphere of the game. What's more, real-time lighting will mean that the sun may go down or dawn may break while you're playing a level.

Essentially, though, we can't expect Core to radically change the game's structure. Why change a winning combination and risk the possibility of alienating fans of *Tomb Raider*? 'We know from the success of *Tomb Raider* that the

combination of different elements – puzzles, exploration, and combat – works really well as it stands,' Adrian asserts. 'Lara will encounter far more human baddies in TR2, though, so you can expect a lot more action than in the previous game. The baddies will also be far more intelligent, so she'll have a lot of ducking and diving to do, in all areas of development, we have looked to enhance and generally improve the feel of TR2', he continues. 'We were aware of certain minor problems in the first game – clipping and tight spaced camera angles, for example – and we've now addressed all of them, simply by enhancing the engine and therefore the 3D system.'

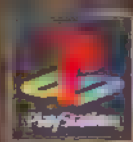
And there is more than a possibility that vehicles will be involved somewhere along the way, a thought Core are being a little coy about it so far...

Look out for our exclusive review and playable demo of *Tomb Raider 2* with next month's issue.



(1) A real candle with real-time lighting. Core Design has spent a great deal of time on the lighting for the sequel. (2) Is that a leather flying jacket? (3) More action, tough baddies.

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SWEET DREAMS

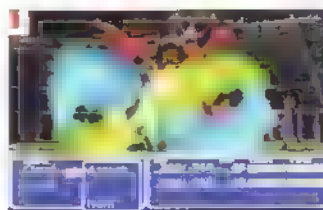
are made of this

At last, the day of PAL *Final Fantasy VII* approaches, and we'll finally get to see what the Japanese have been raving about



To say that *Final Fantasy VII* has been a big hit in Japan would be a bit like saying that The Beatles have 'sold a

few records'. On the day of the game's release, the queues outside Tokyo computer stores stretched for miles, with frantic fans camping out for several nights in order to ensure their place in the lines. To date, in a country where a little over five million PlayStation have been sold, *Final Fantasy VII* has sold, well, a little over five



[1, 2] At critical points you come up against 'bosses' - this robot scorpion is the first you have to deal with.

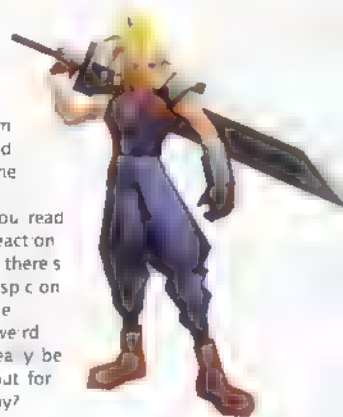


million copies. That's right - pretty much everyone in Japan who owns a PlayStation has bought a copy of the game.

All of which just goes to make Sony's uncertainty about releasing the game in Europe even more curious. Apparently, role-playing games aren't seen as being very popular over here in good old Blighty, hence the long delays in the arrival of the PAL version. Luckily for PlayStation gamers everywhere, though, the waiting will soon be over. Once

Sony decided that the game should be released in Europe, work at converting the PlayStation's biggest selling game ever has proceeded at maximum speed, and the finished article should be on the shelves in November.

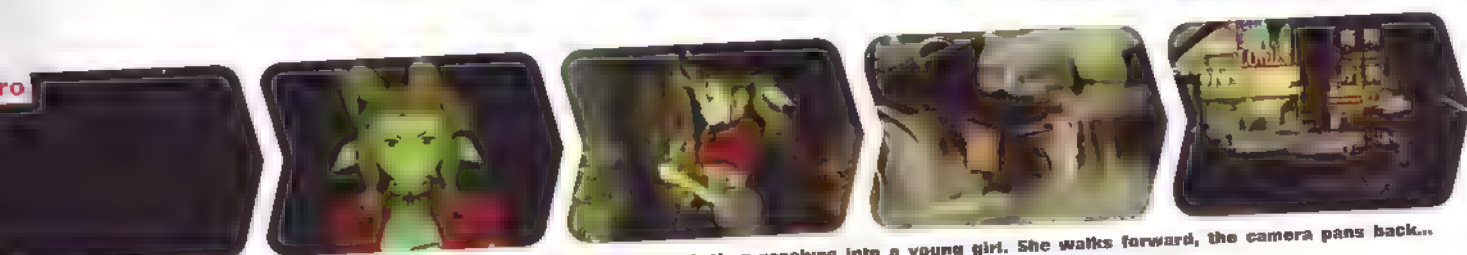
Of course, when you read about the hysterical reaction to the game in Japan, there's always that sneaky suspicion that maybe it's just the Japanese being a bit weird. Surely no game can really be that good? Camping out for days just to get a copy?



[1] At the start of the game you're given a lot of advice and help by other characters, which [2] frees you to get to grips with the combat system.



| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | SCEE | ■ ORIGIN: | Japan |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | SquareSoft | ■ STYLE: | RPG |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | November | ■ PLAYERS: | One |



Final Fantasy VII's stunning intro begins by panning around a starfield, which then resolves into a young girl. She walks forward, the camera pans back...



1 You're given the option of renaming all the major characters as they're introduced. 2 Behind the gorgeous visuals lurks a detailed game system.



Surely that's a bit extreme? Well, no, actually. Having been lucky enough to play an early PAL conversion of the game, we can safely say that *Final Fantasy VII* is that good. Simply put, it's one of the most amazing games we've ever seen.

But what exactly is going to make it so great? Well, the setting. Unlike most role playing games, which tend to be set in fairly standard rip-offs of Tolkien's Middle Earth, *FFVII* takes place in a unique 'steam punk' world where magic has been developed alongside technology to create a bizarre combination of the two. The city of Midgar, where the game begins, is a teeming metropolis built on a huge 'plate', suspended hundreds of feet above the ground by a central support tower and several massive columns. The city is controlled by the mega-corporation Shinra Inc., headed by President Shinra himself, and is powered by eight of Shinra's Mako Reactors, which tap the natural energy force of the planet to

Final Fantasy VII gradually develops into a story of epic proportions, with more sub-plots, twists and melodrama than you can shake a fully-grown oak tree at.

produce electricity. Only the well-off can afford to live on the 'plate' itself, though, and the poor and destitute are confined to living on the ground under the plate in the slum sectors. The end result is something like a cross between *Blade Runner*, Victorian England, and traditional fantasy, and is as fascinating as it is imaginative.

The story. *Final Fantasy VII* casts you as Cloud, a mercenary warrior who was once a member of Shinra's elite SOLDIER unit, but has retired to ▶



3. 21 It's not just the quality of the graphics that make *Final Fantasy VII* so visually stunning - the game also makes clever and imaginative use of camera angles and viewing distance to create a truly cinematic effect.



ESCAPE. THE GUN AMNESTY!

SONY



namco

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PrePlay | Final Fantasy VII



...accelerating as it does so to reveal the whole city of Midgar. The title appears, then the camera starts to zoom back in, with short flashes of a train...

All of the backgrounds are pre-rendered images... cleverly used to create a 3D world

► pursue a 'freelance' career while at SOLDIER you were infused with Mako energy and this, combined with the toughest training in the world, has made you a powerful fighter. It also makes your eyes glow, which seems to impress the ladies. At the start of the game you have been hired by a small rebel group, AVALANCHE, which has discovered that the Reactors, as well as providing power to the city, are secretly draining the planet of its energy to aid in Shinra's nefarious schemes. In an effort to save the planet itself,

Barret, the group's leader, has decided to blow up the reactors

From this seemingly simple (if slightly ambiguous) start, *Final Fantasy VII* gradually develops into a story of epic proportions with more sub-plots, twists, and melodrama than you can shake a fully grown oak tree at. If you're lucky enough to have played *Vandal-Hearts* (9/10, PSM20) you'll know just how much fun a strong plot can be. But *FFVII* makes *Vandal-Hearts* look simple in comparison, and what's more the story is fully interactive, being driven by your decisions and actions rather than making you a passive observer. Even after a mere hour spent playing the game, it's very difficult to avoid getting caught up in *FFVII*'s plot.

The graphics, even on the PlayStation, which is far from



Although *Final Fantasy VII* looks gorgeous, the graphics never come before the needs of the gameplay.

short of games with stunning visuals, *Final Fantasy VII* is going to stand out on the strength of its looks. Each character is made up of Gouraud-shaded polygons, allowing for complete freedom of movement and a simply amazing amount of animation. And all of the backgrounds are pre-rendered images simply dripping with imagination, atmosphere and attention to detail. But rather than being static, these images have been cleverly used to create a three-dimensional world – you can walk 'behind' buildings, under bridges and so on. What's more, the game's frequent cut scenes flow seamlessly into and out of the in-game graphics. The opening animation, for example, swoops across the city of Midgar, then zooms in on a train moving into a station. A couple of your fellow

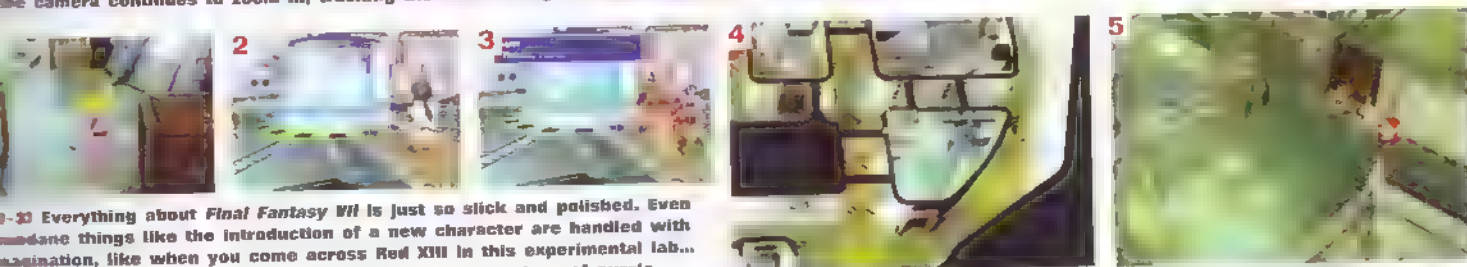


One thing that *Final Fantasy VII* isn't short of is fights. The combat system is real-time – whenever a character's time bar fills up, they get to act – and everything takes place in mind-boggling gorgeous 3D. Just take a look at these, then try to imagine them moving...





The camera continues to zoom in, tracking the train through the city until it pulls in at a station, you jump off the top, and then you're playing the game!



Everything about *Final Fantasy VII* is just so slick and polished. Even mundane things like the introduction of a new character are handled with imagination, like when you come across Red XIII in this experimental lab...

Working out how to get somewhere is a common type of puzzle.

rebe's jump out, followed by you, and then you're playing the game; the result is breathtaking, and has a ready been used to great effect in *Abe's Oddysee* (9/10, *PSM24*). The difference with *FFVII* is that due to the three-dimensional nature of the characters, the perspective isn't limited to a side-on view, and thus the game looks even more impressive.

The size. With a game this good, you really don't want it to end. So it's just as well that *FFVII* is HUGE. Running no less than three CDs. As the various parts of the game can be dealt with in different ways, how long it takes to finish will vary from person to person. SquareSoft, however, claims that the average playing time is 120 hours.

The gameplay. Last, but by no means least comes the most critical element of any game. Thankfully, with so much else already going for it, SquareSoft hasn't let *Final Fantasy VII* down in this department, either. Although 'officially' a roleplaying game, *FFVII* defies simple classification. It has the character development and detailed combat, magic, and equipment system that you'd expect from an

RPG, but also draws heavily on elements of graphic adventures and platform games, and even has a wide variety of 'special event games', such as when you must compete in a fitness test with an athlete, for example. All of this and more is seamlessly integrated into an incredibly absorbing whole, with a

Although officially an RPG *FFVII* also draws on graphic adventures and platformers, and even has 'event' games...



As well as grabbing your attention, the graphics are also used to give a sense of the size and scope of both game world and the game itself.

fairly simple control system that takes only minutes to pick up.

In short, then, it looks like the Japanese had the right idea about *Final Fantasy VII*. This is a game that's destined for greatness, and will set a new standard for others to strive towards. Even if the mere mention of the word 'RPG' is normally enough to make you cringe, *Final Fantasy VII* will change your mind forever.



WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW THE GUN CLUB'S CLOSED?..

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PrePlay | Beast

HUMANIMAL INSTINCTS

Enter a world of mysterious, shape-shifting warriors
in this *Manimal*-style beat 'em up from Japan...

Umagine, for a moment, that you're a new 3D beat 'em up. You've been in training for months, developing your skills and your all-important looks. Nevertheless, eventually the day of truth will arrive. You're going to have to face off against the likes of *Tekken 2* and *Soul Blade*. To have any chance at all you're going to have to be both very, very good, and have a neat trick or two up your sleeve. It's a confrontation that's seen the end of nearly all your predecessors. If you were *Beast*, though, you might just stand a chance.

The game is set in a version of our modern world, where deadly shape-shifters walk unsuspected among us, and offers players the chance to take on the role of one of these powerful weres and duke it out with your rivals.

From what we've seen so far, *Beast* is shaping up to be a cut above the average 3D



punch-fest. For a start, there are the graphics. *Beast* isn't Gouraud shaded, giving the characters a slightly blocky look, but they're well-designed and highly detailed. Likewise, the backgrounds show a little bit more imagination than usual, and are fully 3D. Combined with the game's impressive speed, fluid animation, and clever use of camera angles, it all adds up to make a very good looking game.

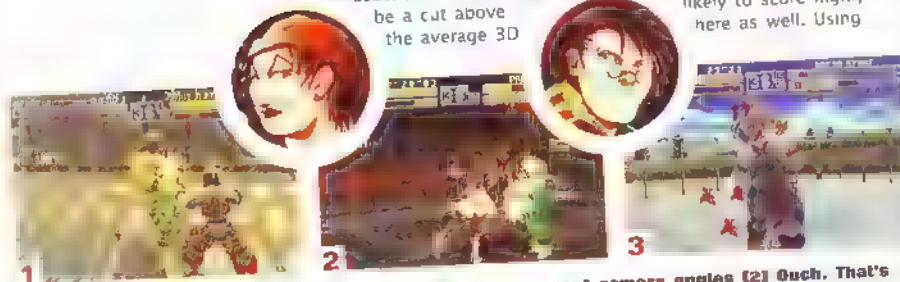
Of course, the most important thing for any beat 'em up is the gameplay, but *Beast* seems likely to score highly here as well. Using

[1, 2] Looks are definitely one of the things *Beast* has going for it. Despite the slightly 'blocky' style, the animation is fluid and the moves imaginative.



only the joystick and two buttons, each character is capable of a surprisingly wide range of moves, and an even wider range of combos. The unique thing about *Beast*, though, is that all the characters can transform into a powerful man-beast at the press of a button. As well as looking very cool, this opens a whole new range of more powerful moves and combos, making use of the character's new fangs, claws, and so on. In effect, each fighter is two characters in one.

It's too early to tell just how good *Beast* is going to be, but it looks promising. Has *Tekken 2* finally met its match? Await a full review.



[1] As well as combo moves, *Beast* also features some neat camera angles [2] Ouch. That's gotta hurt. [3] When in beast form, a whole new range of nasty moves become available.

| | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|---------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| PUBLISHER: | Virgin Interactive | RELEASE DATE: | November | PLAYERS: | One or two |
| DEVELOPER: | Hudson Soft | ORIGIN: | Japan | STYLE: | 3D beat 'em up |

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The New Breed

A drugs operation, a spot of archaeology and the end of the world is nigh. What can George and Nico do in Revolution's sequel to *Broken Sword*?



(1) Trapped in Professor Gubier's sprawling pile, and with the place on fire, things are looking bleak for George. (2) And it all looked rosy minutes earlier. (3) Again, the graphics look amazing.



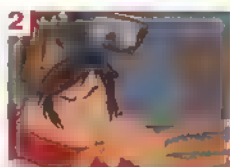
Experienced gamers of an adventuresome disposition may not be aware of Revolution Software, but they'll certainly have heard of their games. *Lure Of The Temptress* and *Beneath A Steel Sky* remain two of the best Amiga/PC adventures, and the original *Broken Sword* has sold more than 300,000 copies since its release in November of last year. In the twinkling of an eye, the sequel is

a most upon us, improved, reckon Revolution, beyond recognition.

Perhaps the biggest problem for the original was the timing of its arrival. Would you like to turn up at a party with *Formula One* and *Tekken 2*? It'd be akin to arriving at a fondue bash with Liam and Patsy. But despite this, *Broken Sword* registered a whopping nine with StarPlayer insignia to boot (PSM11). And as the reviewer pointed out at the time, the game was a marked change of pace for the PlayStation, which had become used to seat-of-the-pants racers and polygonal bashing

festivals. The original closely followed the storyline of the legendary Knights Templar, the Holy Order of warrior monks who became established during the first crusade in 1107.

The chaps at Revolution have been perusing their history books again, and have based the sequel on the Mayans, a South American civilisation which mysteriously disappeared after thriving for centuries. The Mayans were, apparently, a highly sophisticated people who had an incredibly complex calendar system and many strong beliefs about astrology, tracking stars with amazing accuracy. They believed the world ran in cycles before destroying



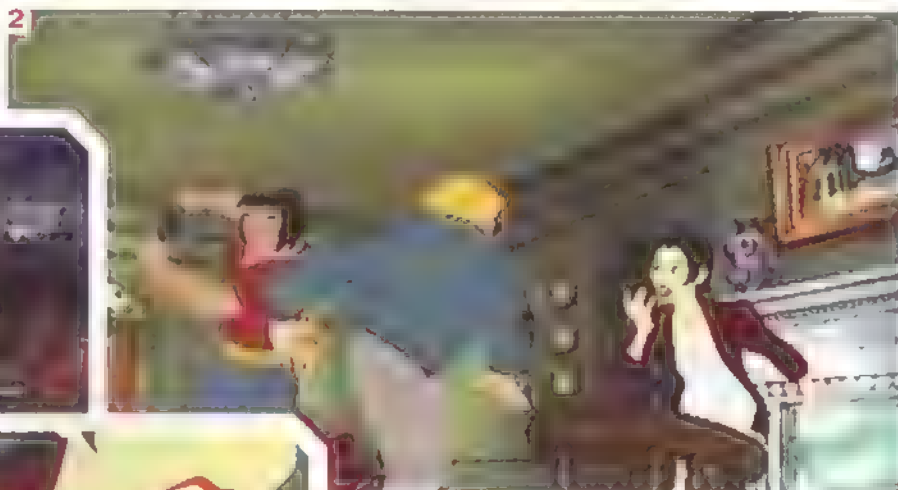
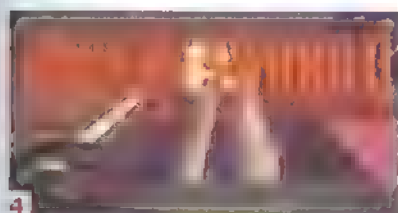
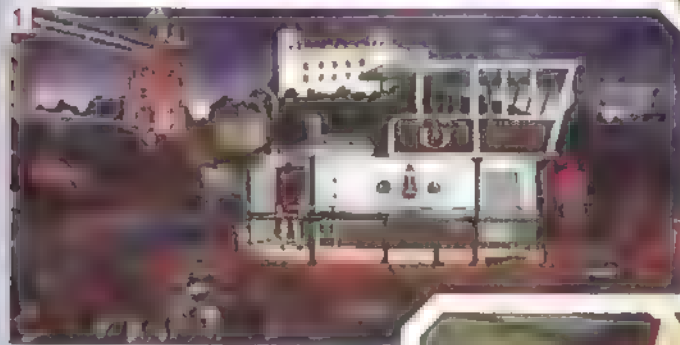
(1) A tarantula is released on hapless George. (2) Revolution have overcome the problems of long loading times.

Revolution have been perusing the history books again, and have based the sequel on the Mayans



| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | SCEE | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | Revolution | ■ STYLE: | Adventure |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ PLAYERS: | One |

(1) The backgrounds have five layers of parallax scrolling to give the game a three-dimensional feel, despite the fact it's essentially 2D. (2) The plot involves the ancient Mayan civilisation, drugs and archaeology. (3) Journalist Nico gets it in the neck. We know how she feels. (4) Cinematic, eh?



With the extra puzzles and short-cuts in the interface, the gameplay should be much better

itself, and they predicted the end of the fifth cycle in, gulp, 2012. Let's hope they weren't that brainy after all, eh?

Anyway, to the point. Years on, a Mayan archaeologist called Professor Oubier has been piecing together artifacts from days of yore and has found out when the world is to end. Unfortunately, Oubier is addicted to cocaine and an evil drugs baron named Karzac uses this to manipulate Oubier.

Karzac discovers the secrets of the Prof's work and wants to use this info for the betterment of self. Bad man. It's up to the game's heroes, George and Nico, to ensure that Karzac doesn't realise his fiendish plans.

Revolution have spent a great deal of time working on the engine for the sequel. No longer will there be long loading times between the scenes. There are some five parallax layers in the background to give the visuals a greater sense of depth essentially, the writers

are attempting to create a three dimensional feel within the game's 2D environment. Revolution have a so made use of graduated shadows to give the game 16 levels of translucency. This allows effects like the characters' visual appearance changing when they walk behind smoke or glass, for example.

Revolution reckon that technically, *The Smoking Mirror* is a vast improvement, and with the extra puzzles and new short-cuts in the interface, the gameplay should be much better as well. If the world's on our side, we'll post the review next month.



Revolution Software – a potted history

Revolution was set up in 1990 by Charles Cecil and two co-founders, Tony Warriner and David Sykes, and was originally based in Hull. Today the company is located in York, and employs 20 staff. Charles Cecil worked at Arctic Software after graduating from university, writing games for the ZX81, Spectrum and Amstrad formats. He then joined US Gold, as software development manager, before transferring to Activision to work in a similar capacity.

In their seven-year existence, Revolution have produced three highly successful adventure games. *Lure Of The Temptress* arrived in 1992 on PC, Amiga and Atari ST to



rapturous reviews from the specialist press. Indeed, it was the first time a gaming world had existed in real-time and set standards that even much larger software companies struggled to emulate. Beneath A Steel Sky (PC and Amiga) as received equally favourably two years later. In 1994, a sci-fi adventure of epic proportions, *And last year came Broken Sword* (PS and PC), an outstanding, animated point and click adventure. Revolution reckon the sequel, subtitled *The Smoking Mirror*, improves on the original massively. Gone are the long, obtrusive loading times between sequences – now everything moves much quicker.

DEATH BECOMES HIM

The insane realms of **Discworld** return, only this time your quest is to seek out the slippery **Grim Reaper**. Your trusty giant turtle awaits...

111 *Discworld* is full of magical characters and **120** old geezers, reminiscing about the old days.



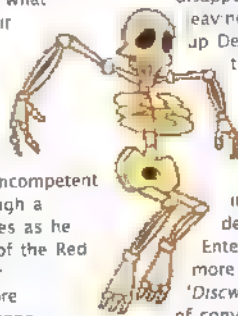
Back in the early days of PlayStation, those in search of an adventure game had very little choice but to opt for

Discworld, a point and click adventure in the style of *Monkey Island* or *Full Throttle*. Based on Terry Pratchett's acclaimed *Discworld* books, the title wasn't a bad attempt at the genre, with PSM awarding it a commendable seven in issue one. Since then, however, the adventure game genre has changed greatly, with 3D titles like *Resident Evil* and *Tomb Raider* redefining what people expect from their adventures games. So why on earth are Psygnosis releasing what ought to be a very dated affair?

In the first game you had to guide the incompetent wizard Rincewind through a series of (mis)adventures as he tried to rid Discworld of the Red Dragon. This time your problems are a tad more important: Death has gone missing. One day he was there,



slaying people left, right and centre, then suddenly he disappears without trace, leaving Rincewind to take up Death's scythe while he tries to find him.



The cartoon graphics of the first game were very smart and similar effort has been taken in the sequel, with developers Perfect Entertainment employing more than 50 animators. '*Discworld 2*' is a marriage of conventional film animation and computer game animation,' explains creative director **Gregg Barnett**. 'Where possible, we stuck as close as we could to conventional techniques, using story boarding and layout before going into studio production. The line-art cells were then scanned and coloured on Silicon Graphics workstations.'

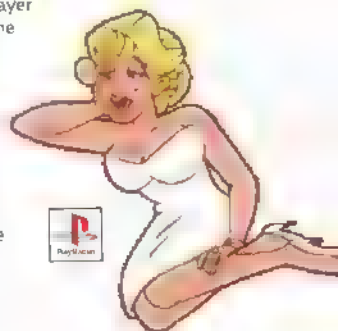
The main criticism directed at the original title was the difficulty level the game structure proving

111 The villain of the piece, the elusive Death. **120** Graphics are even smarter than in the prequel combining film and computer game animation.



too complicated for its own good. We wondered if the sequel would be more approachable? Gregg agrees: '*Discworld 2* is just as challenging as the first game, but far more friendly. You won't be greeted by any more "That doesn't work" responses from Rincewind. Every action on every object solicits a sensible response, and if the player is on the right track, the game lets him know it. Likewise, if a player is heading in the wrong direction, there are little nudges in the right direction.' Thank God for small mercies.

Expect an in-depth verdict of the complete game any day now.



The game contains three musical numbers, including a Python-esque ditty about the pleasures of dying.

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|------------|---------------------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Psygnosis | ■ RELEASE DATE: | November | ■ PLAYERS: | One |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | Perfect Entertainment | ■ ORIGIN: | UK | ■ STYLE: | Point and click adventure |

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PrePlay | TOCA Touring Cars Championship

LAST CHANCE
SALE ONLY

Racing games, racing games everywhere, but not a touring car to drive. Until now, that is...

An accurate, realistic racing sim might not be what you'd expect from Codemasters. After all, this is the company that brought *Micro Machines* to the world. But that's exactly what its next game is going to be. *TOCA Touring Cars Championship* falls into the category of 'arcade simulation', being based on a realistic model of the handling and performance of race-tuned touring cars, but at the same time being fairly forgiving to the player – although crashing or skidding off the course will lose you time, you'll never actually get stuck in a gravel pit, much like *Porsche Challenge* and the superb *V-Rally*. What makes *TOCA Touring Cars Championship* unique,

You can't forget about the driver you just passed – he'll be right there on your bumper...



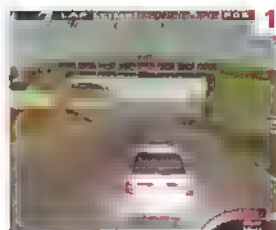
2 (1) *TOCA* is full of neat little graphical touches, like these brake lights. (2) A high-resolution version is being considered. (3) Oops...

though, is its subject – touring car races. Despite the upswing in popularity of the sport, this will be the first touring car game for the PlayStation, and one of the first on any platform. Touring car racing is, in many ways, the British equivalent of America's Indy Car. It's fast, furious, and involves cars that, on the outside at least, look like, well, cars.

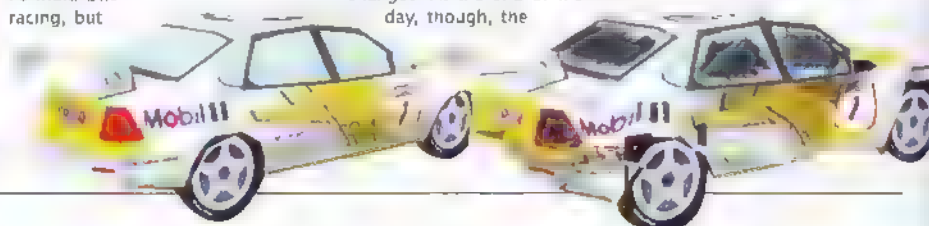
The teams are all limited by very precise specifications set out by TOCA, the sport's governing body, which limit the engine size and power. This leads to very close races, with no one team able to dominate. Changes in position are common, with the cars often squashed up against each other. This in turn means that there are a lot more crashes, spins, and skids than in, say, Formula One racing, but

the drivers are also able to recover and continue much more often.

What makes touring car racing different to Indy Car is that the cars used are based on production models. Super Tourers (the class featured in *TOCA*) are all 2-litre, four-door family saloons, and on the outside must be identical to the road car. On the inside, of course, the teams make a lot of changes. At the end of the day, though, the



(1) Just like in real-life racing, the weather in *TOCA* isn't always nice and sunny. And if you're not careful in the rain...
(2) ...You can end up spinning off and smashing your car up.



| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Codemasters | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | In-house | ■ STYLE: | Racing sim |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ PLAYERS: | One to four |



Cars remain very similar to the ones being driven around by families all over the country, just with a much better tuned engine. And it's this that gives the sport (and the game) much of its appeal. Because it's officially licensed, *TOCA Touring Cars Championship* has been able to use accurate versions of the big Super Tourer cars – the Honda Accord, Audi A4, Vauxhall Vectra, Volvo 540, Ford Mondeo, Nissan Primera, Peugeot 405, and Renault Laguna.

The real thing

Put all this together, and you've got the basis for an excellent racing game. And that's just what *TOCA Touring Cars Championship* is shaping up to be. The early version of the game we've seen is very impressive to look at. Every car has been skilfully modelled, complete with all the right paint schemes and



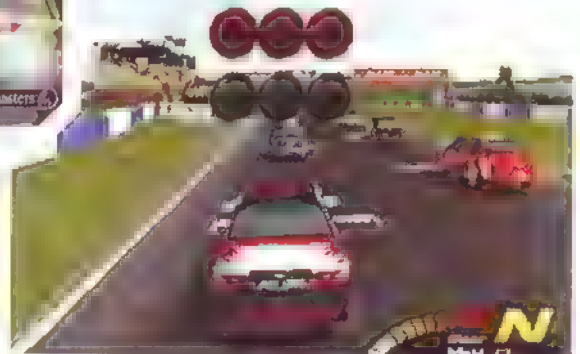
sponsorship stickers. What's more, each of these models is fully deformable. You might not actually be able to wreck the cars, but you can certainly smack them about a bit and end up with broken windows, bent spoilers, and crumpled panels.

The same attention to detail has gone into the tracks, with each course being modelled on Ordnance Survey maps combined with photographs and videos of the actual site.

Best of all, though, the early version of *TOCA* plays like real touring car racing. The cars, all very closely matched, tend to bunch up, jostling for position with lots of overtaking and some very tricky moments at the corners. It's a testament to the game's AI routines that the

(1) From the main menu you'll be able to choose a variety of options, including a full championship. (2) A fast start off the grid is always handy.

LAP TIME 00:00:00 POS 15 2
BEST 00:00:00



computer cars don't seem like simple drones zooming around the track, but like real drivers. Once you overtake in *TOCA*, you can't forget about the driver you just passed – he'll be right there on your bumper, pushing to regain his position. Even better, the computer drivers each have different styles and personalities, which can quickly result in nasty grudge matches – which will continue from race to race, as the AI 'remembers' who did what.

Of course, whether or not the PlayStation really needs another racing game is a debatable point. But throw in a four-player split screen option, and it looks like Codemasters might well end up with another smash on its hands.



(1) Make a mistake and you can end up in some spectacular crashes. (2, 3) Qualifying is a vital part of *TOCA*. As all the cars are so close in performance, it can be hard to move through the pack quickly. (4) There are four views to choose from. (5) The AI on the computer cars is fallible, and they do make mistakes, just like real drivers.

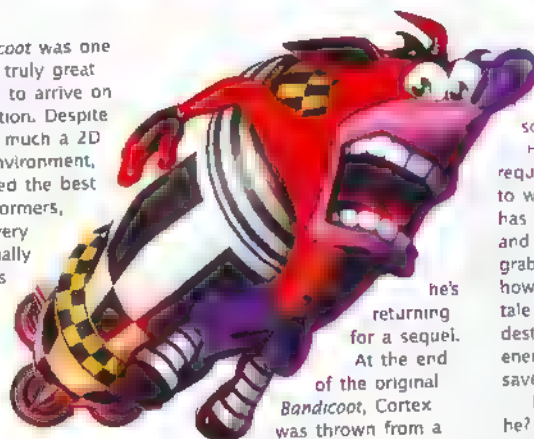
PrePlay | Crash Bandicoot 2



Naughty Dog are bringing back everyone's favourite long-nosed marsupial to take on the evil Doctor Cortex. The return of Crash is due soon...

Crash Bandicoot was one of the first truly great platformers to arrive on the PlayStation. Despite being very much a 2D game within a 3D environment, Crash liberally pilfered the best bits from other platformers, and the result was very good indeed. Essentially it offered three types of action – running into the screen, running out of the screen and running from side to side, enabling the programmers to drop in a welter of different challenges for the gamer.

In fact, the long-nosed marsupial enjoyed his adventures against the evil Doctors Neo Cortex and Nitrus Brio so much,



he's returning for a sequel.

At the end of the original Bandicoot, Cortex was thrown from a flying machine and found himself in a cavern which, as luck would have it, contained a huge magic crystal which could store a ridiculous amount of solar

power. 'Aha', he thought, 'I can harness the power of the sun via this crystal and destroy the world.' Or something to that effect.

However, the master crystal requires 25 slave crystals in order to work properly. Because Cortex has no mates, he decides to try and deceive our hero Crash into grabbing the crystals for him. But how? The dastardly Doc invents a tale in which the world will be destroyed by a surge of solar energy and only the crystals can save the planet.

But Crash isn't that stupid, is he? Of course not. No, Cortex knows he has to trap our hero in order to make him listen to his story, so he has to lure him to his space station. And this is where it gets really far-fetched.

Crash liberally pilfered the best bits from other platformers, and the result was very good indeed.



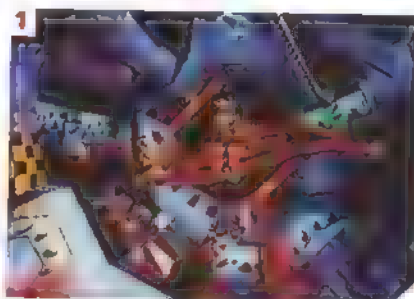
[1] But no. Is this the ubiquitous slippery slidey ice world? [2] Crash finds himself up against the evil Dr Cortex once again. [3] The long-nosed marsupial still sports the denim and sneakers. [4] Cortex lures him to the ship.

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | SCEE | ■ ORIGIN: | United States |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | Naughty Dog | ■ STYLE: | Platform |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | November | ■ PLAYERS: | One |

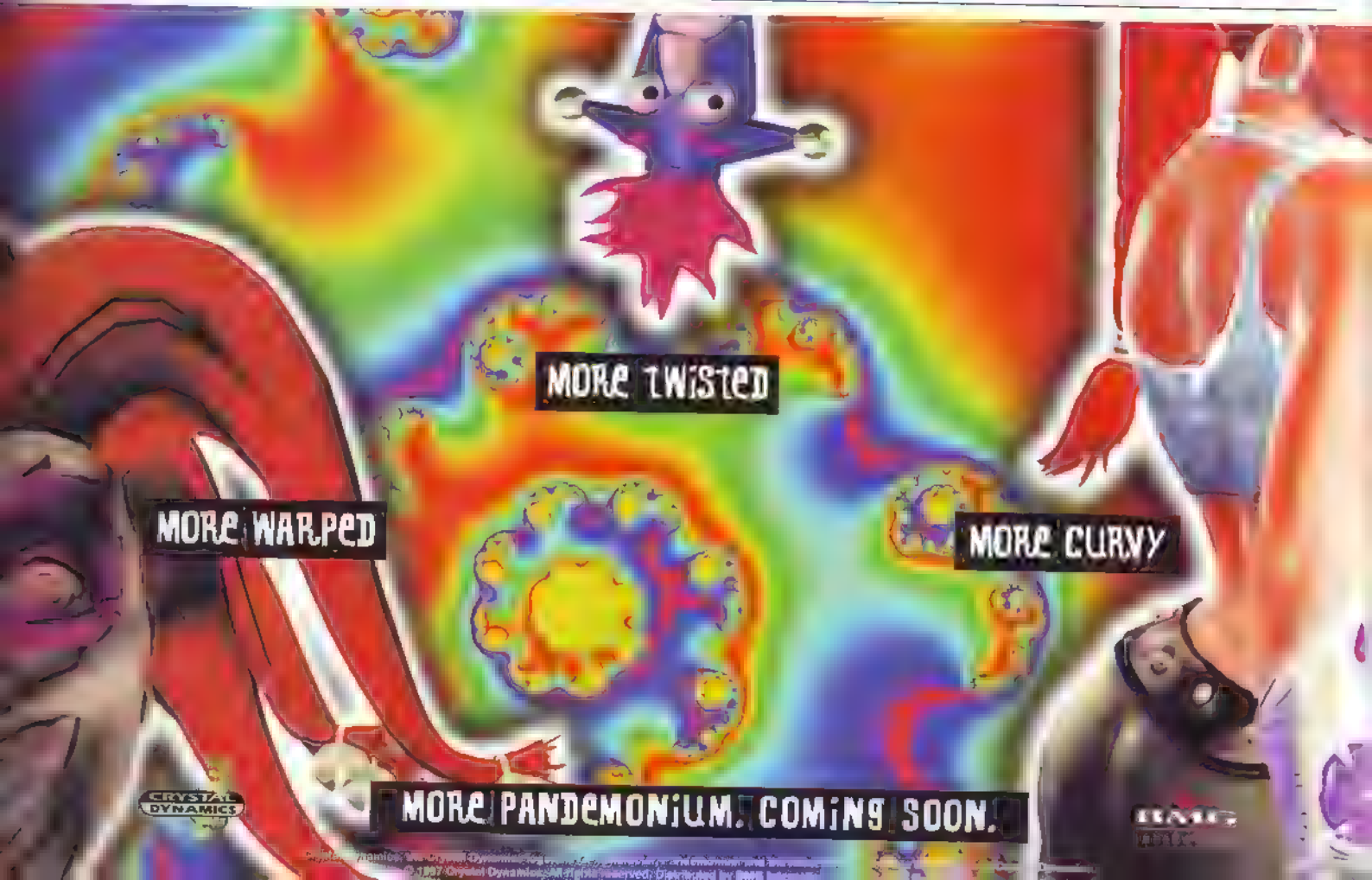


Crash has added a few strings to his bow for the sequel. He can now skate across ice, jet ski, jet pack and monkey swing over pits, as well as perform his more traditional spin 'n' smash assaults. As well as the new skills, there are loads of new locations and characters.

All the environments and characters are modelled in 3D and fully texture-mapped, and the levels will offer players more freedom of movement. Two of the characters will even have digitised speech. With any luck Naughty Dog can incorporate the elements required for a successful sequel rather than just go through the motions with a proven formula. We're confident they can.



(1) Dr Cortex demanded that Dr Nitrus Brio build a sophisticated space station before he kindly dispensed with his services. Crash is lured here so Cortex can persuade him to do dastardly deeds, thinking he's doing good. (2) Coders Naughty Dog have introduced loads of new locations. (3) You must KILL that little penguin. (4) Still, they've kept all the original crates.



MORE TWISTED

MORE WARPED

MORE CURVY

MORE PANDEMONIUM. COMING SOON.

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

PLAYSTATION

PrePlay **Red Asphalt**

blood on the bumper

Racing games with **stunning graphics**, great gameplay and challenging opponents are fun. But racers with **really big guns** are the best...



[1] Big guns. Oh yes, very big guns indeed. [2] Of course, you have to race as well as blasting everything.



Once upon a time, there was a Super Nintendo game called *Rock 'N' Roll Racing*. It used one of those isometric views that were popular in the days before 3D accelerator chips and 32-bit consoles, and pitted the player against a bunch of heavily armed maniacs, driving futuristic cars in a race to the death. Its polished graphics, neat effects, great courses and superb gameplay all ensured that *RNRR* was a big hit. Predictably, rumours of a sequel began within weeks. Only now, nearly four years later, is the game nearing completion. *Red Asphalt* is based on the same idea as *Rock 'N' Roll Racing* – high speed races around

weird alien worlds in deadly armoured cars with huge guns. The most obvious difference is that the action is presented in gorgeous 3D. From either a first person, behind-the-wheel view or third person, above and behind the car view, players can engage in all sorts of mindless destruction as they compete against the drivers of the evil alien dictator Draenek across four worlds and 25 courses.

What's more, *Red Asphalt* features six different drivers, each with their own reasons for hating Draenek and each with their own unique talents. The drivers are also rated in several different abilities, including their motoring and weapon skills. As the game progresses, your driver gains experience which can then be used to increase his or her abilities, giving you an edge in future races. Likewise, the six vehicles on offer each have their own strengths and weaknesses, including a variety of different offensive and defensive weapon

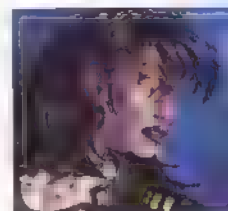
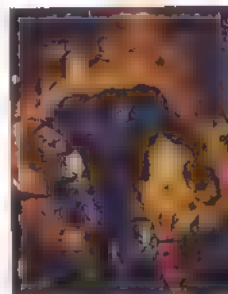
systems. Winning races earns you prize money, which in turn can be used to upgrade your car or to buy a new one.

This combination of upgradeable cars and weaponry with customisable drivers should ensure that *Red Asphalt* has a longer lifespan than most arcade blasters. How well you do in each race depends on your finishing position and how much damage you inflict on your hapless foes, allowing for a variety of driving styles and tactics which will influence your choice of car driver, and power ups.

The PlayStation on is hardly lacking in top-quality racing action. However, the recent trend has been for more serious simulation games, and since the excellent *Wipeout 2097*, the futuristic racing shooter has been neglected. With its combination of futuristic style, great graphics and fast and furious blasting, *Red Asphalt* could be the game all big gun fans have been waiting for...



Just two of the charming group of people you'll get to meet in *Red Asphalt*.



[1] Rocketing along with a Nitro Boost, you come across this van. To ram, or not to ram, that is the question... [2] Missile locks. You gotta love 'em. [3] And the quarterback is toast.

■ PUBLISHER:

Interplay

■ RELEASE DATE:

October

■ PLAYERS:

One or two via link-up

■ DEVELOPER:

In-house

■ ORIGIN

United States

■ STYLE

Arcade racer/shoot 'em up

"Makes Sega Rally look like an old age pensioner"

— PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

"PlayStation owners everywhere will be rejoicing with this game"

— PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

"Fastest thing on the PlayStation"

— GAMES

Official PlayStation Magazine

PlayStation Plus



Official cars from 1997 WRC season

Multi-player mode

Varied weather and terrain driving conditions

Real time 3D imaging and Dolby™ Surround Sound™

42 Tracks - the largest number ever

Totally realistic rally road handling

Real engine sound and radio commentary with professional co-drivers

V-RALLY

1997 CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION



INFOGRAMES

PrePlay | Actua Soccer 2



When *Actua Soccer* was reviewed in *PSM3*, we said it was the best football game on the PlayStation. Then *ISS Pro* took the mantle in May. Now **Gremlin** wants its title back, and it won't take **no for an answer**

[1] The Czech striker makes no mistake as he slots the ball home past the stricken 'keeper. [2] With a ponytail like that, it's got to be the digital Baggio. [3] The Croat smacks the German. Top lad.



When developers are working on a football game, the hardest thing to get right is the mix between graphics and gameplay. *ISS Pro* managed it wonderfully. *FIFA '97* didn't. Happily, it looks like Gremlin's latest attempt at football replication, *Actua Soccer 2*, has got the mix just right, and Christmas will be better for it.

When we last battled our way up the M1, the *Actua Soccer* chaps were happily wading

through the 92 texture maps for every league side in Britain. So when we wandered up to the Gremlin stand at the recent ECTS show for an update, we were a little surprised to see the likes of Maldini and Juninho strutting the stuff for their national sides. Initially we thought it was a case of the Premiership flexing their legal muscles and putting paid to Gremlin's plans. The truth, however, turned out to be much less sinister, as Gremlin's PR exec Martin Brammall explained: 'We

just realised that designing the graphics for all 92 teams would be impractical - it was just taking too much time. So, we decided to switch to international teams.'

To make up for the loss of all the English clubs, Gremlin has included 22 teams, all of which can be fully edited to allow complete changes in kit design and players' names. The system also lets you save the new teams to memory card and edit them at a later date - great for keeping up with the latest changes in world soccer.

General opinion at the recent ECTS was that *Actua Soccer 2* was the best football game at the show...

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Gremlin | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | In-house | ■ STYLE: | Football sim |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ PLAYERS: | Two |



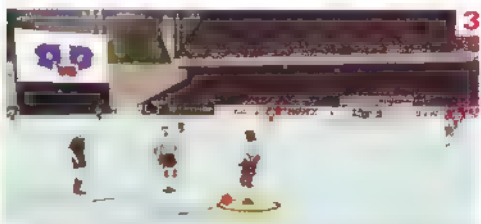
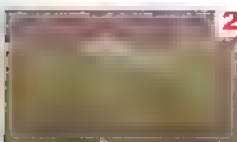
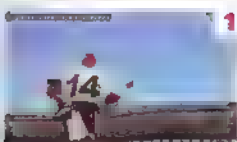
(1) The Czech Republic against Japan - hardly a battle of the titans is it? (2) They've either just scored or there's about to be some top flight action.

The stadiums haven't changed from the original version of the game, though, and this provides an interesting juxtaposition when teams such as Uzbekistan play the mighty Belarus at Wigan's Springfield Park. Slightly strange, but refreshing all the same, and it does give us a taste of what it would be like if England won the right to hold the 2006 World Cup.

General opinion at the recent ECTS was that *Actua Soccer 2* was the best football game at the show. While other games continue with the old style of console football (long, aimless kicks), *Actua Soccer 2* has adopted a similar style to *ISS Pro*, letting you play the ball accurately to the furthest player forward, rather than just hoofing it aimlessly up pitch. This helps to give things a very fluid feel and makes it far more accessible to the novice. Above everything else, it is this accessibility that is most noticeable about the latest *Actua* game. Within a few minutes of first kicking the ball you'll have made a few solid tackles, worked a couple of free kicks and created at least a couple of goalmouth opportunities. And although scoring is likely to be a bit harder than in the first game, to counter this there are more ways that you can put the ball in than net, encouraging innovative play.

So far our favourite is the delicate chip over the stranded keeper, with the diving header coming a close second. Each goal is greeted with a very satisfying blow of the onion bag and a huge roar from the fans. In fact the game is full of neat little touches like this, including playing with an orange ball on snow-covered pitches, the way the replay mode slides into a widescreen type thing, and the training pitch where you can practice all manner of free kicks.

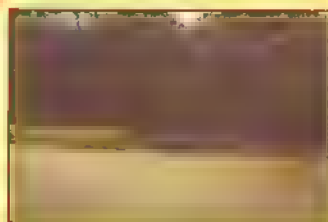
With two months still to go before it's released, *Actua Soccer 2* is already looking very special. It'll be interesting to see whether Gremlin can finally overtake EA in the football sim league this Christmas. In our opinion, it fully deserves to



(1) Each character is made up of some 250 polygons (2) The game features various weather conditions. (3) In the old days they used an orange ball for snow. Now they just abandon the game.

FOR SALE

SPORTS CARS & CLASSICS



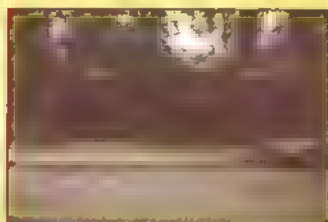
Ferrari F40 1989,

6000 miles, FSH, personalised numberplate W4NK6R £184,995



Porsche 959 1990,

motion sensors, 6 different a... titanium steering lock ... £139,995



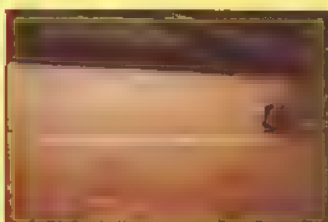
Jaguar XJ220 1991,

top car easily does 200mph loss of licence forces sale£90A



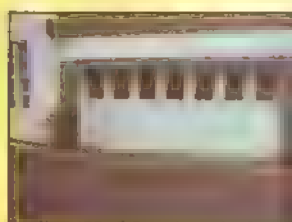
Aston Martin DB7 1990,

rear spoilers, outsize graphics panels, classy motor.....£61,995



Porsche Boxster 1996,

only 50 miles, one extremely cautious, driver (Ad. agency MD).....£90A



McLaren F1 1996,

previously owned by famous model, carbs, lovely form, tan hide.....£



Bentley Turbo R 1992,

12,000 miles, very good condition, first to see will want it£69,000



Ferrari F355 1995,

blood red interior, untimely death, owner forces widow to sell ... £91

GRAND THEFT AUTO

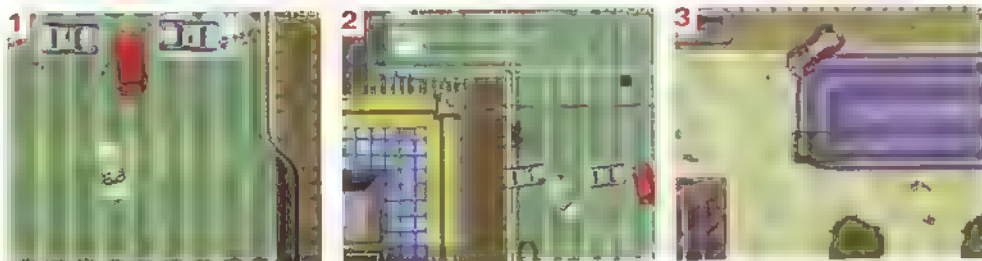
IT'S CRIMINAL NOT TO

COMING ON PLAY & P

PrePlay | Grand Theft Auto

stealing from the pros

DMA Design are in the throes of completing one of the PlayStation's most original and controversial games. And we can't wait to play it...



(1) You can earn extra points for a wide variety of acts of mindless carnage. (2) There's a massive gap - burst through that blockade. (3) Even when the road ends, you can always drive on the path.

You screech the police car you nicked earlier to a halt in front of a long yellow school bus. The bus driver slams on the anchors. You approach the window, pistol in hand, and fire a couple of rounds into him before hauling him out onto the road, jumping in and taking off with the police in hot pursuit.

Grand Theft Auto is the latest game from the tartan tricksters of DMA Design, most famous for their innovative *Lemmings* series. For those not familiar with *Lemmings*, it involved thousands of cute little creatures hurling themselves off cliffs. But this level of destruction is a mere picnic when compared to the goings-on in *GTA*. Murder, arson, corruption, hijacking, kidnapping, drugs running - 'Concerned of Chipping Sodbury' is going to have a field day when the popular press get a hold of this.

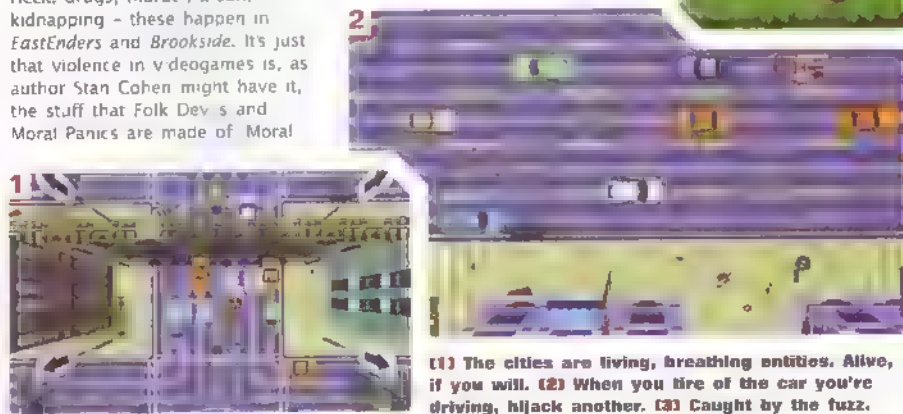
Not that there's anything here that most of us haven't seen on the TV or at the pictures. And

there's been a fair amount of violence in videogames before - Gremlin's *Loaded* games were a mite on the bloody side, and beat 'em ups are hardly a waik in the park, especially those finishing manoeuvres where you impale someone on a metal spike.

With *Grand Theft Auto*, DMA is attempting to create a mature game for a mature audience. Heck, drugs, murder, arson, kidnapping - these happen in *EastEnders* and *Brookside*. It's just that violence in videogames is, as author Stan Cohen might have it, the stuff that Folk Devils and Moral Panics are made of. Moral

panics aside, though, the idea of the game is to push your way up in the criminal fraternity by stealing cars and completing missions throughout three huge cities, viewed top-down via a zooming camera which pans in and out when required.

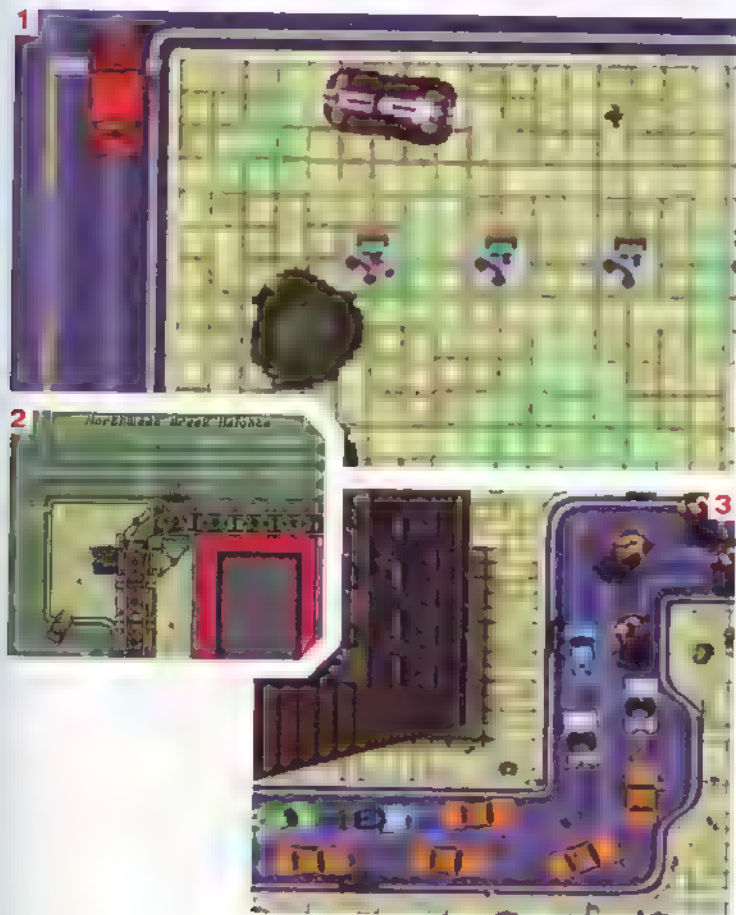
One of the things that makes *GTA* so interesting is the freedom it gives players. You can literally



(1) The cities are living, breathing entities. Alive, if you will. (2) When you fire of the car you're driving, hijack another. (3) Caught by the fuzz.

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | BMG | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ DEVELOPER: | DMA Design | ■ STYLE: | Driving/action |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ PLAYERS: | One |

(1) It's not clever to mow down pedestrians. (2) There are more than 24 vehicles to pick up. You can even steal a train. (3) The cabs are backed up to the lights because of one or two minor explosions. And a few deaths.



do what you want, when you want. Each city is made up of some 2000 miles of roads. We're talking B.G. There are more than two dozen vehicles to procure by whatever means possible, each with their own style of handling. Think trains, buses, cars of all kinds, emergency services and police vehicles. You register points for the deeds of derring-do you execute – run over a group of Hare Krishnas or put a bullet through the temple of an ice-cream man, and you can rack up thousands. You can swap vehicles at any time by politely holding up traffic and shooting the driver of whichever car you fancy. So, if you need a quick getaway, you'd be wise to purloin a sports car. Each type of car is even tuned in to a different radio station, so one minute you're cruising to country, a spot of carjacking later and you'll be listening to pounding techno.

The more attention you attract to yourself, though, the more police you'll have on your tail. Because things are happening all the time, whether you're doing anything or not, you can never be quite sure what's around the next corner. Or indeed, if there is a next corner – dead ends and alleyways abound in the cities.

With this game, the DMA team are trying to create the feel of some of their favourite movies, like Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* series. And they promise that there's never been a videogame quite like *Grand Theft Auto*. We're inclined to agree with them.



COURIER CRISIS

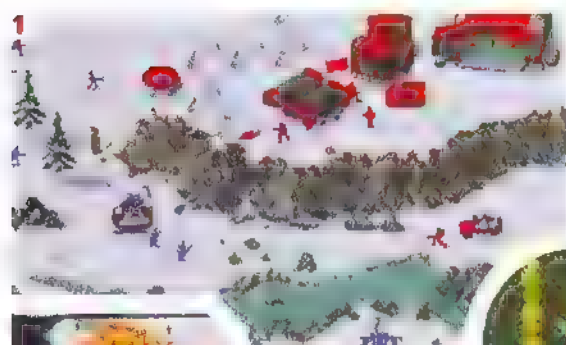
ON THE STREETS NOV 97

(AND THE PAVEMENT)



Return of the Conqueror

Westwood delighted gamers with their near-perfect port of the PC classic *Command & Conquer*. Ten months on, the team is busy perfecting the sequel...



(1) Defending your own base while attacking the enemy's remains the core of the game. (2) Things still blow up a lot.

When it comes to changing the face of computer games, *Command & Conquer* ranks up alongside the likes of *Elite* and *Doom*. Its huge sales and lasting popularity have ensured that the real-time strategy game is here to stay. Any worries that the genre wouldn't prove so popular with PlayStation owners were smashed by the game's equally impressive performance when it was re-released for Sony's box of tricks earlier this year (9/10, PSM15).

The good news is that the game's sequel, *Red Alert*, is nearly finished, and even better news is that more effort has been put into tailoring the title specifically to the PlayStation.

Red Alert is set on an alternate version of Earth where Hitler never came to power, and

Stalin's Russia has instead become the great threat to the 'free' world. This version of our planet also features a fantastically valuable mineral, similar in properties to the Tiberium of *C&C*. As the game begins, the Soviets have begun a massive invasion of Allied Europe, and guess what? It's up to you to sort things out as

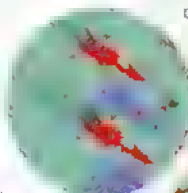
commander of either side. Like its predecessor, *Red Alert* is a real-time strategy game in which you must complete a series of missions to ensure victory for your side. Each operation is played on a large isometric map on which you build a base, manufacture units, and send them on their merry, death-dealing way toward the enemy. Although the basics of the game are much the same as *C&C*, there are several differences between the two.

First of all, *Red Alert* features an all-new range of units, with more differences between the battling sides. Special unit types lead to different options for the Soviets and Allies, which leads to a greater variety of strategies and tactics. This is taken advantage of by the mission designs, which are far more varied and complex than in *C&C*, and several missions also lead directly into one another.

Other improvements include the graphics, which will run at a constant 60fps and possibly be hi-res. Likewise, the in-game cut scenes and movies have been redone and various missions are being redesigned to take into account the strengths of the PlayStation version and feedback from players of *C&C*.

Most importantly of all, *Red Alert* will be compatible with the Sony mouse, which is great news for all fans of real-time strategy games. Mouse control is the best way to play these games, and the joypad-only system of the PS *C&C* was one of its only major failings. Indeed it's possible that

Red Alert may be sold complete with a mouse. Await a full review.

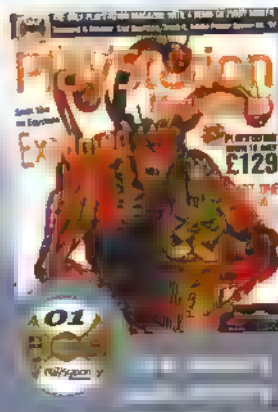


Red Alert features many new units, including a wider variety of aircraft for both sides of the conflict.

| | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|--------------------|
| PUBLISHER: | Virgin Interactive | RELEASE DATE: | November | PLAYERS: | One or two |
| DEVELOPER: | Westwood Studios | ORIGIN: | United States | STYLE: | Real-time strategy |

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PlayStation

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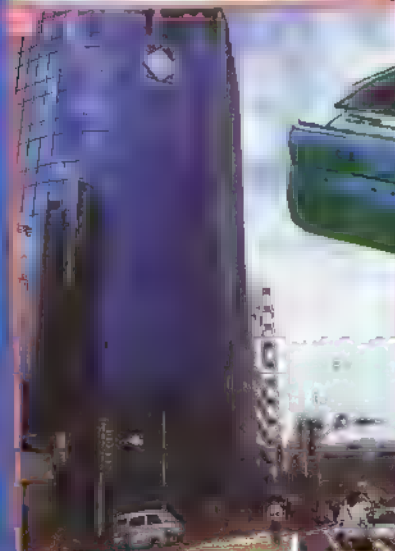
...he was launched in
...for many, the future

IF IT'S NOT REAL-TIME 3D,
IT'S NOT A GAME! ANNOUNCED
SCE'S AKIRA SATO, AND THE
WORLD REALISED THERE MAY
BE MORE THAN FUZZY FMV...

hoping for something good to come along.

that Sony began to design a real-time
3D graphics system for the professional
broadcasting market. As explained in
the very first issue of the *Official*

known as System G - represented
something of a milestone in its history.
Indeed it was the first piece of
hardware that allowed producers to
manipulate graphics in real-time for
...
rely on painstakingly prerecorded
sequences. It was predictably
great success - such a success, in
fact, that when Sony's Research &
Development (R&D) department
now also the R&D department
employed. It was the first time
had set up a new R&D department
advanced games console. The R&D
of the PlayStation 2.



But it wasn't all plain sailing.

In 1988, Sony entered into an agreement
with Nintendo to design a CD-ROM drive
for the latter's SNES console. Sony
hoped this would give it a relatively
stress-free introduction to the alien
world of videogames, and was planning
to simultaneously develop its own console
which would run both SNES carts and

CD-ROMs. The name Sony
picked for this ill-
fated machine was 'PlayStation'.

hand - didn't like
the sound of this

Here, was a company used to
having complete control over
both hardware and software.
The last thing it wanted was
a massive multinational like

Sony jostling into its market.

So in 1991, just a day after

it off, employing Philips to design
the CD-ROM add-on instead. Enraged
and embarrassed, Sony cancelled the
PlayStation project, even though around

as though the whole affair was over
it was, of course, far from over.

Sony wasn't used to being pushed
and certainly wasn't about to be bullied
out of the lucrative videogame scene.

3D real-time graphics. For

and the CD-ROM from the PlayStation.

the PlayStation 2.

development the company

set up a new wing, Sony Computer

From this point on, Sony managed to do absolutely everything right. It made the important decision to develop a dedicated 32-bit 3D games console, rather than, say, a thinly disguised 16-bit update like the Amiga 32 or Sega MegaCD, or a laughable multimedia entertainment system like the 300 or 400 (there never was a market for such

bumph, as both Philips and 3DO were soon to find out). It also filled its machine with powerful custom graphics chips, so huge chunks of data could be pulled from the CD and manipulated in real-time. It's not real-time 3D, it's not a game," announced SCE president Akira Sato, and the world realised there may be more to CD-ROM games than fuzzy FMV sections and audio CD scores. Sony also insisted on designing its own components to keep the cost of the product down. Ken Kutaragi's aim to develop a cheap, powerful 3D game system had been realised.

With work on the hardware coming along in leaps and bounds during 1993, Kutaragi and SCE vice president Teruhisa Yokunaka began a world-wide tour to woo the development community. During these conferences, Sony constantly sought the opinion of programmers and artists about what they'd like to see in the console, and what would tempt them to develop for it. The main

response was that the machine would have to be easy to work on - something which Sony took immediate notice of. The result was the PlayStation's comprehensive selection of graphics libraries, designed to allow programmers to create 3D environments quickly and simply, without having to learn the intricacies of the PlayStation's

previously spurned by Nintendo) was first and perhaps most important, giving the PlayStation easy access to a huge range of brilliant arcade games. UK company Psygnosis was also brought on board in 1993, and immediately began work on a certain futuristic racer which would go on to wow European gamers in two years' time.

THE JAPANESE LAUNCH

Sony called it 'The most important hardware launch of the decade' and although the reality felt a little short, it was certainly a major event.

The December 3 PlayStation roll-out saw 100,000 machines hit Japanese stores and

pre-ordered, and the rest went to gamers who queued all night for a chance to pick the machine up on its opening day.

However, although this was an impressive achievement for a newcomer



yet 10,2401. However, that price did include a copy of Virtua Fighter - a slightly juddery but otherwise pristine conversion of the coin-op.

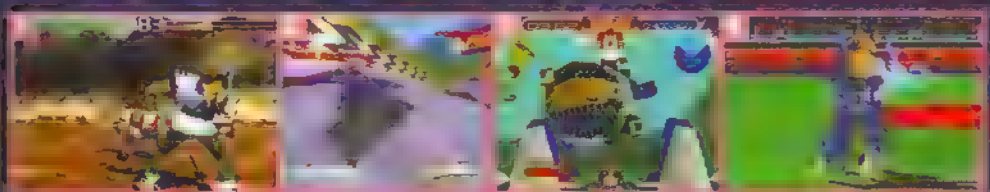
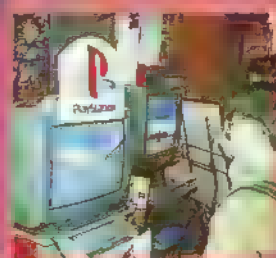
So, despite the PlayStation's arguably superior

Ridge Racer, Saturn started as the stronger of the

two consoles. This was confirmed later, when retail

by December 31, while the PlayStation had managed

300,000. This would, however, prove to be Sega's last significant victory over its new-found rival.



hardware. One developer even managed to get a decent demo up and running within two weeks.

So, Sony's plan had worked. The PlayStation rapidly gained a reputation for being both powerful and easy to work with, and developers signed up in their droves. Namco (another company

Everyone else followed throughout 1994, a year in which the design was finalised, and the Japanese public were treated to their first tantalising glimpses of the machine through TV ads, videogame shows, and brilliantly choreographed press conferences. There was, of course, equal awareness that Sega was developing its own 32-bit console, due to launch two weeks before the PlayStation, but it looked as though Sony's machine was gathering an unstoppable momentum. As Dominic Mallinson at Psygnosis points out, "I think the PlayStation had won from ▶

THE UK LAUNCH



Europe finally got its 'Sony' taste of the PlayStation in September '95. *Electronic Weekly* 'blew' on the

PSX, and the PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine.

Home to the PlayStation 1, the PlayStation 1 was not without its controversies. The PSX was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine, and the PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine.

of the 32-bit PlayStation 1 console.

The PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine, and the PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine.

and the PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine.

With the PlayStation 1, the PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine.

The PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine, and the PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine.

Home to the PlayStation 1, the PlayStation 1 was not without its controversies. The PSX was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine, and the PlayStation 1 was the first console to be reviewed by the magazine.

them. Foolishly, 'pushed out' to compete with *Ridge Racer* and was poorly received.

The gaming press, which expected an arcade-perfect title, to add insult to injury, this was the month Sony released a flawless PlayStation translation of Tekken. Namco's legendary arcade beat 'em up, the beautifully drawn characters and amazingly fluid frame rate has gamers 'nothing' in the mouth with excitement both in Japan and the UK, where the title was shown off at an otherwise disappointing Spring ECTS. Tekken was perhaps the most important 32-bit title to appear in 1995, because it showed there was no longer a huge chasm between powerful arcade machines and home consoles. Sega was now, yes, beaten, though.

had to look at the way it was all set up - it was more elegant, it was a lot easier to program. The architecture

toon GP. Sega, meanwhile, entered '95 still touting *Virtua Fighter* as its key title, adding just one more decent

the company brought forward the Saturn launch from September 2 to May 10, just a day before the massive E

though, it was Sony that now pulled the PlayStation 1 into the mainstream.

coin-op. However, the latter's release

silence and wonder why it had only



Ridge Racer (1995) was the 'killer app' which sold the PlayStation 1. It provided many important titles including Tekken 2 (1995) and Ridge Racer 2 (1996).

The US roll-out was admittedly successful, though, with Sega claiming a (slightly dodgy) sales figure of around 100,000. In fact, the company was so happy with this result, it used the same trick again in the UK, bringing forward the release of its machine to June 8. It also was also showing off early demos of *Virtua Fighter 2* in Japan, and had recently released a new, remixed version of *Virtua Fighter*, complete with better textures - perhaps in an effort to compete with Namco's *Tekken*. Whatever the case, the company was feeling confident and Sony, which had

few new titles to call upon, seemed to be enough it was falling behind. It seemed, being the operative word, for September was the month in which Sony finally released the PlayStation in both the States and Europe. Both were incredible successes, relegating the Saturn to a clear second place (even though it had been released months before) and making Sony's machine even more attractive to third-party developers. In fact, by the end of '95, 1400 companies had signed up to create PlayStation titles, while 300 games were actually set for release. And, by the end of October, there was a PlayStation user base of 50,000 in the UK (allegedly double that of the Saturn), while US sales had reached 1 million by Christmas, outselling the Saturn by an amazing 15:1 ratio. In Japan, the story was slightly different. Almost 2 million units were in homes by the end of the year, and



POWER CUT.



£199.99

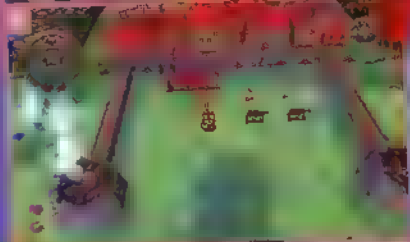
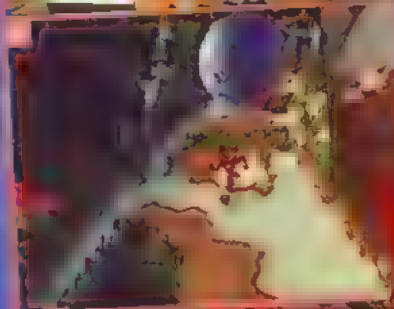
PlayStation
TEXT TO GO



demand for the machine was so great that a second factory was set up to manufacture more. However, the Saturn was still outselling the PlayStation in its machines in the major release date exception, lots of titles, *Virtua Fighter 2*, *Street Fighter*, and *Sega Real* had been converted to the machine with great success. Sony's lead in the console and video game market seemed to be slipping. It was clear that while Sony was winning the sales war in the rest of the world, Sega was not. In the grip on its domestic market. Away from this titanic struggle in the east, though, the latter half of '95 was an important time for

WHEN 1996 KICKED OFF, THE PLAYSTATION WAS CLEARLY IN THE SUPERIOR POSITION TO THE SATURN - WHICH HAD DEFINITELY NOT BEEN THE CASE JUST 12 MONTHS BEFORE

western developers eager to get to grips with the new 32-bit machines. The PlayStation was seen as the more user-friendly PlayStation. Big names like Electronic Arts, Gremlin, and MicroProse all jumped aboard, often converting successful PC or MegaDrive titles to the machine. Out of this development effort came some of the best PlayStation titles of the year: *Actua Soccer* and *Thunder Hawk*. Importantly, the PlayStation was attracting a variety of game styles, not just arcade conversions which meant that although Sony's in-house development team was weaker than Sega's, it was able to come up with killer apps. Things were looking good.



in March Tekken 2 and Captain
The former was, and still is, the
definitive 3D beat 'em up, sporting
a slick frame-rate, brilliant character
the latter, meanwhile, combined
gripping plot, horrifying monsters and
brilliant gameplay to create
the best atmospheric innovator
and original dance ever. It's
time to console its importance
attracting new, more
gamers to the PlayStation
unparalleled significance
it was perhaps frustration
just sort of event which led
Sony's emboldened animous
time claim that the Saturn
was actually outperforming
Playstation in the UK. The assertion
was based on independent sales

the Saturn ahead
one week during
1995. However,
proclaimed the
temporary aberration
caused by a glitch
of PlayStation

It was May, however, that

provided the key flashpoint of '96. The E3 show. Here, Nintendo officially revealed its N64 console to Western audiences for the very first time. The machine had been glimpsed throughout '95 and '96 by the gaming press and had previously been shown off to the Japanese public at Nintendo's own Shoshinkai show in November '95, but this was the first time that US and UK punters had managed to get their grubby hands on games like *Super Mario 64* and *Pilot Wings*. Needless to say, they were mightily impressed and, despite plenty of good PlayStation software on show, the N64 dominated the event.

But how bad was this news for

Sony? As it happens, not that bad at all, really. If the N64 had come out when it was supposed to, in 1995, it may well have crushed the Saturn and PlayStation in one fell swoop. However, by setting a final Japanese release date for June '96, Nintendo gave both Sony and Sega time to set up massive and secure installed user bases. Plus, both the machine and the games would be expensive, compared to the PlayStation, which was unlikely to switch.

It was clear, though, that both

Sony and Sega were "fired" by a new

before the E3 show, Sony announced it would be dropping the price of the PlayStation to \$199 in the States. A move mimicked by Sega just 24 hours later. This was predictably read as

Sony saw it more as a pre-emptive strike to tempt potential customers

IT'S NOT A CONSOLE. IT'S A LIFESTYLE ACCESSORY



When the PlayStation was launched in the UK, in September 1995, it was famously marketed as a cool object rather than just a toy. The question is, why? We talked to Geoff Well, originally the PlayStation UK marketing manager, to find out.

PSM So why did you decide to market the PlayStation as a cool accessory?

Geoff Well, originally we were going to target the 18-25 year olds - the same audience the Megadrive and SNES were aimed at in the early '80s, when games first went mass market. Kids looked like the easiest group, because they still went to school. However, the more we discussed it, the more it was decided that videogames aren't only for kids. We just needed to get people to accept them as another form of escapism, like films or chugging. So we decided to take a 16-30 year old target audience, which the kids always aspire to, anyway.

PSM How did you set about giving the PlayStation a cool image?

Geoff To get credibility, you need word of mouth, association and endorsement. First we asked, who are the influences? And I opinion formers? Who decides what's in and what's out? And, of course, it's the underground magazines. *NJ*, *Mixmag*, *Here*, *Garden* - these often have circulations of below 5,000, but a lot of the bigger mags get their ideas from them. So I started off doing PlayStation demonstrations for about 12 really underground publications.

PSM How did they react?

Geoff All of them started off by saying

"To market videogames, you've got to get the word out, put it in *Teen* and every magazine, it's the only way of going. That's what it's all about." They wanted to focus purely on the graphics from the word of mouth. I was getting people to say "Jesus, I've just seen the PlayStation 2, you've got to check this thing out!"

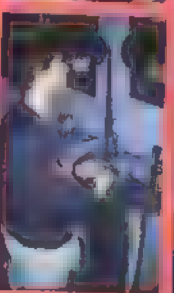
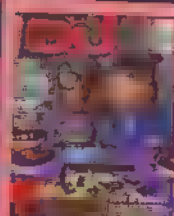
Then we started going to big London launch parties. The first one was at the Virgin Megastore 2 party, when they relaunched the Oxford Street Megastore. I just rang them up and asked them to let me put my PlayStation 2 in the store. They were there. We did a launch party that summer.

PSM What happened next?

Geoff Next we had Clontarf, where we handed out flyers with the PlayStation logo on, and we planned the Extreme Championships, got into free sports, and set up the Ministry of Sound game room. There are now 35 clubs with installations - we supply PlayStation and support them with software, they put our logo on their flyers. At one point we had demoed in 100 clubs, which worked out at a million people a week seeing PlayStation demos. It was exactly the audience we wanted to attract.

So we launched with a high level of credibility, and with a big TV campaign to back it up. Within six months we had beaten Sega so badly that they were listed in certain retail outlets. That's what made working at Sony so exciting. We were exploring new areas - we weren't going down the traditional routes. No one knew whether it was possible to go mass market and retain your

credibility, but you have to retain it, because that's what makes you different.



N64 managed to achieve strong determination to compete with the N64 also filtered down to 32-bit developers who had seen *Super Mario 64*, and wanted to prove they could equal it. Hence EA saw early glimpses of Sega's surreal *NIGHTS*

and then a LS equivalent in September, Sony managed to turn heads in between with a great software line-up at the Tokyo Game Show, including the extraordinarily inventive in-house *Street Fighter*, *Knappa*, *Knappa* and *Wage Racer*. Meanwhile, in the UK the PlayStation was outselling the Saturn by 7.7 machines to 1 in the month following the price cut, an impressive figure no doubt aided by the British release of *Resident Evil* and *Probot*, three part *Die Hard* trilogy.

By September the figures were even more impressive. PlayStation

just didn't seem to have the media exposure, mass market allure, or cool image of the PlayStation.

On the subject of mass allure, the end of the year was undoubtedly dominated by the release of one title: *Tomb Raider*. Not only was Core Design's ground-breaking Indiana Jones-style computer game, but its heroine, Lara Croft, seemed to arouse the libido of the entire male population of the universe, catapulting her breasts into the kind of media spotlight usually reserved for Spice Girls and the Minogue sisters. Magazine covers, newspaper articles and rumours

PERIPHERAL VISIONS



developed by the Sonic the Hedgehog team) and Naughty Dog's *Crash Bandicoot*. As it happened, the latter, in its straightforward, no-messing-about stab at the genre, was perhaps the weakest of the three (despite being a great game in its own right), but this was unimportant. With titles like *Nippon*, *2097*, *Final Doom*, *Star Gladiators* and *Street Fighter Alpha*, the PlayStation was clearly not short on varied, quality software.

The rest of the year saw this strength being confirmed at every turn, as when the N64 achieved a reasonably

European sales had reached the elusive one-million mark (340,000 in the UK), giving the machine a 76-per-cent share of the videogame market. On top of that, it was also revealed that *Resident Evil* had sold 21,500 copies in two days, making it the fastest-selling CD-ROM game Britain had ever seen. The Saturn did have a brilliant conversion of arcade beat 'em up *Fighting Vipers* (to boast, as well as *Virtua Cop 2* and Climax's great RPG, *Dark Saviour*), but these were only really appealing to current Saturn owners, rather than attracting new ones. Sega's machine

or its single followed, giving the PlayStation a massive boost in popularity with people who had previously never even thought of buying a games console. A Saturn version of the game

followed, but by then it was too late to really affect the machine's status. The PlayStation had become THE console platform to develop for, as far as western teams were concerned, while the Saturn was merely a receptacle for key conversions. By Christmas, Sony's machine was claiming an estimated 85 per cent of UK console sales, bringing the British user base up to 750,000.

of both consoles in late '94 was all but over.

So far, 1997 has proved just as successful as the two previous years. PlayStation sales have been happily multiplying every month, and heavy competition from the N64 has done little to diminish the performance of Sony's console, *per excellence*. Software, too, has continued to improve and sell in ever-greater numbers, the first confirmation of this being the Japanese launch of *Final Fantasy*.

gamers the chance to create their own games, and to swap ideas over the internet via the machine's own web site. It was a brilliant, original concept which was received with open arms when released in Europe and the US later in the year.

Back in the UK, March 4 finally saw the launch of the N64 to much hype and media fanfare. Once again, though, Sony was there to take the wind out of Nintendo's sails - just a week after the machine's premiere, the company announced its Platinum range of classic PlayStation titles, all retailing at an incredible £19.99.

It was clear that Sony's own price drop had been an amazing success, selling an extra 50,000 machines to new punters who probably weren't aware of the technical differences between the machines. The UK user base was now up to 750,000 - a remarkable figure dwarfed only by the worldwide equivalent, an estimated 12 million.

Importantly, though, behind all these price drops, the PlayStation remains a living console. The Tokyo Game show, in April, revealed 459 new titles (including Namco's *Gun Butter* and SCE's own *Ghost in the Shell*), while E3 in May boasted 145 among

FAMOUS PEOPLE AND THEIR PLAYSTATIONS



ROBBIE WILLIAMS

To celebrate the UK launch, Sony put PlayStations back stage at *Top of the Pops*. Here, Robbie takes advantage of a lull in his career to master *Ridge Racer*.



DAMON ALBARN

Pop Brit-peppers Blur also got in on the act. Look at their little faces deep in concentration... of course, the machines hadn't even been switched on at this point.



PRINCE NASEEM NAMED

A deal with posturing pugilist Prince Naseem. In 1995, saw PlayStation logos adorning his shorts instead of the usual leopard skin design. A victory for taste.



MICHAEL JACKSON

Surrounded by a veritable army of bouncers, the pale-faced pop icon attended Sony's party at E3 two years ago, scaring everyone else off the machines.

Till on January 31, where 1.3 million pre-ordered copies went home with delighted gamers. Even more impressively, PlayStations themselves sold out all over Japan as RPG nuts rushed out to buy them just to play Square's three-disc *tour de force* (incidentally pushing the Japanese installed base up to 5.6 million, as opposed to 4,800,000 Saturns).

And more Oriental excitement

was to come in the shape of the Yaroze, released from February 28. This sleek, black machine, equipped with C Compiler, debugger and graphics libraries, gave

Then to put in an extra kick, the price of the PlayStation itself was knocked down to just £129, making it over £100 cheaper than the N64. Again, the move was read in some quarters as desperation, but in a month which should have been dominated by Nintendo, Sony managed to grab the headlines twice - a remarkable achievement for a console more than two years old.

Plus any 'running scared' jibes

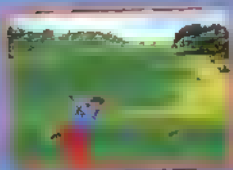
that Nintendo may have made looked pretty hollow by May, as the N64 went through two price drops in as many months, bringing the RRP down to £149.

Then sequels like *Tomb Raider 2*, *Resident Evil 2* and *Crash Bandicoot 2*. It seems a majority of the world's development community still sees the PlayStation as its number-one concern, hardly surprising considering recent figures from Sony, suggesting that 20 million PlayStations have now been manufactured. Whatever may happen with the PlayStation 2, with Saturn 2, or with any other new format, for that matter, owners of the original Sony console have plenty of time left to enjoy the machine. At least for the next three years, at least.

298 AND CO



Golf Sym
PSM 3 - 5/10 - Golf sim
Doesn't play as smoothly as some of the others, but the graphics are good.



Actua Golf 2
PSM 3 - 5/10 - Golf sim
Better graphics and smoother play than the first game.



Actua Soccer Club Edition



Adidas Power Soccer



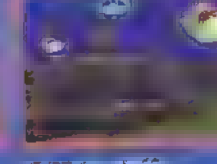
Adidas Power Soccer Int



Alijan General
PSM 20 - 5/10 - Wargame
Dated, graphically hideous wargame with few playable units.



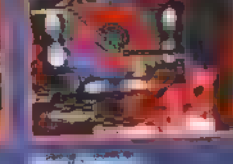
Alone In The Dark
PSM 2 - 8/10 - Action adventure
One of the most atmospheric and playable adventures around.



Battle Stations
PSM 19 - 8/10 - Action/Strategy
Original, but terrible beat 'em up game with little to recommend.



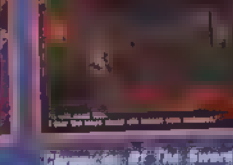
Bohannon
PSM 16 - 5/10 - Military strategy
A messy, janky, and over-the-top game that's more exhausting than enjoyable.



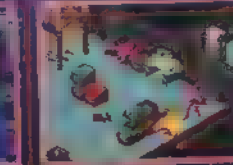
Bust A Move 2
PSM 8 - 9/10 - Puzzle game
Simple, yet infuriatingly addictive. A near legend.



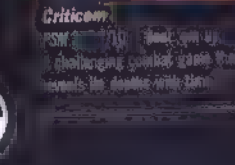
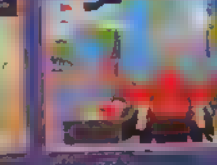
Carnage Heart
PSM 20 - 8/10 - Combat strategy
Intensely absorbing and addictive, but mentally demanding. Not for everyone.



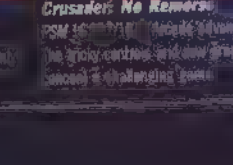
Criticom
PSM 1 - 7/10 - Action/Strategy
A challenging combat game that only needs its sequel with time.



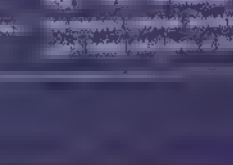
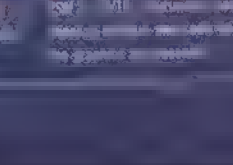
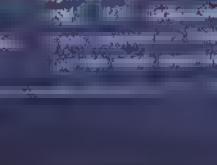
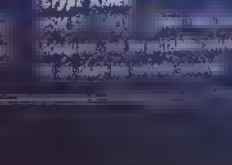
Crusader: No Remorse
PSM 15 - 7/10 - Action/Strategy
The only console game that's a challenge.



Cyber Sled
PSM 1 - 7/10 - Action/Strategy
A challenging combat game that only needs its sequel with time.



Cyber Sled
PSM 1 - 7/10 - Action/Strategy
A challenging combat game that only needs its sequel with time.



HUNTING!

3.24 BY 3.30 HOURS
 4.12 4.15 HOURS
 5.1 5.15 HOURS ON THE 30
 6.1 6.15 HOURS ON THE 30
 7.1 7.15 HOURS ON THE 30



Adventure Of Love



Agile Warrior



Alien Combat



Alien Evolution Global



Alien Trilogy



Alien Star Soccer



Alien Combat



Axion Senna Kart Race



Baldwin



Battle Arena Toshinden



Battle Arena Toshinden



Battle Arena Toshinden



Battle Dragon



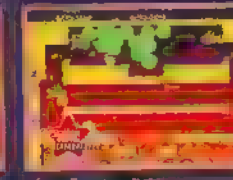
Blood Dragon Legend Of Kai



Brack Point



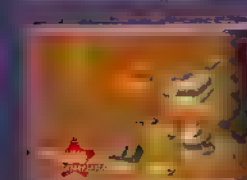
Broken Sword



Bubble Bobble



Burning Road



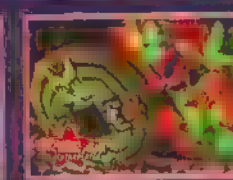
Command & Conquer



Contra Legacy Of War



Cool Boarder



Crash Bandicoot



Creature Shock



Crash



Dark Force



Dark Force



Darklight Conflict



Darkstalkers



Davis Cup Tennis



Defcon

PlayStation



Destruction Derby 2
PSM 18 = 3/10 — Racing game
A local roads and gamplay overhaul of the original title. Broken cars.



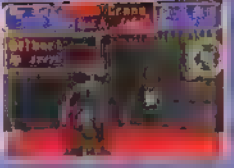
Devil's Reception
PSM 25 = 3/10 — Platform puzzle
Not a bad idea. Some of the levels are on paper than it is to play.



Die Hard Trilogy
PSM 18 = 5/10 — Arcade adventure
Three good games for the price of one. Clunky in places, but the games.



ESPN Extreme Games
PSM 18 = 4/10 — Skate and ski
Amazing but absolutely limited. Best of the best, really hard.



Excalibur 2555AD
PSM 18 = 1/10 — 3D adventure
Interactive action adventure, completely overshadowed by Tomb Raider.



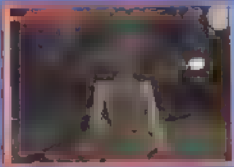
Extreme Pinball
PSM 18 = 5/10 — Pinball sim
Absorbs elements of a real-time, arcade-style pinball game.



Flying Runner
PSM 18 = 5/10 — Platform game
A fun but short-lived experience that will appeal to younger players.



Floating Runner
PSM 18 = 5/10 — Platform game
A fun but short-lived experience that will appeal to younger players.



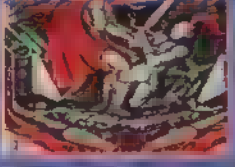
Hyper Tennis: Final Match
PSM 22 = 2/10 — Sports sim
A poor man's zone that plays as a tennis match. Hyper but lingers behind.



Jumping Flash 2
PSM 12 = 5/10 — Platform
Similar to the original, but with even better 3D visuals. Still too easy.



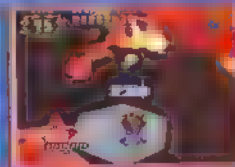
Johnny Bazzokone
PSM 4 = 5/10 — Platform
Patience-baiting platform like what enough charm to keep you playing.



Jonah Lomu Rugby
PSM 18 = 7/10 — Rugby sim
Not as solid as the man himself, but challenging if you can persuade.



Krazy Ivan
PSM 5 = 7/10 — 3D shoot 'em up
As slick as an egg, as slick but it's a little more for the best.



Kurushi
PSM 24 = 5/10 — Puzzle game
Enthralling mental workout let down only by a poor two-player option.



Lammings 3D
PSM 18 = 7/10 — Puzzle game
The classic 2D puzzle game given a 3D facelift for the 32-bit generation.



Life Force Tenka
PSM 18 = 7/10 — 3D shoot 'em up
A bit dull, in other words.



Little Big Adventure
PSM 18 = 5/10 — Arcade adventure
Typically weird, gaudy, and visually charming but deeply flawed.



Loaded
PSM 2 = 7/10 — Shoot 'em up
Marvelous lighting effects and frantic action, but it soon gets repetitive.



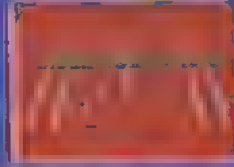
ISS Pro
PSM 18 = 7/10 — 3D shoot 'em up
A fun but short-lived experience that will appeal to younger players.



Jet Ride
PSM 19 = 6/10 — 3D shoot 'em up
Sword and sword-inspired. Dooka, Chelanga, Chelanga but only.



Johnny Bazzokone
PSM 3 = 5/10 — Racing game
Another futuristic racer which tries to match. Hyper but lingers behind.



Jonah Lomu Rugby
PSM 22 = 2/10 — Sports sim
A poor man's zone that plays as a tennis match. Hyper but lingers behind.



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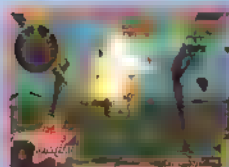


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PlayStation Present



Mario Kart 64
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Karting game
Basically just a rip-off of Mario Kart. Good fun for a short while.

Mario Kart 64
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Karting game
Amiable enough but not the least bit innovative. A mere nostalgic trip.

Mario Kart 64
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Karting game
Not particularly innovative or adventurous, but fun nevertheless.

Micro Machines V3
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Karting game
Quite addictive racing action with almost non-ending track ideas.

AMK Trilogy
PSM 13 - 7/10 - Beat 'em up
2D hitboxes, borrow one of the playground by the likes of Jackson.



Mario Kart 64
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Karting game
Another row through cart-op history.

Mario Kart 64
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Karting game
The penultimate title in the series. Not only game, it's a game.

Mario Kart 64
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Karting game
A little variation and a few more levels under the hood.

NASCAR Race
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Racing game
Great graphics, driving on a track, seriously into the service.

NBA Live '97
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Basketball sim
A convincing sim that shows the management strategy.

NBA In The Zone
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Basketball sim
Moderately playable dribble game. Looks OK, but total NBA players.



NFL Gameday
PSM 12 - 7/10 - US Football sim
The first American football game on the PlayStation. Good fun, but.

NFL Quarterback Club '97
PSM 12 - 8/10 - US Football sim
A smart interpretation of American football that tries nothing new.

NHL '97
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Ice hockey sim
A playable and visually superb hockey game from the master of the sport, EA.

NHL Face Off
PSM 12 - 7/10 - Ice hockey sim
A worthy addition to the dominant ice hockey genre. Looking and fun.

NHL Face Off '97
PSM 12 - 8/10 - Ice hockey sim
The much better than the first one, which makes it look a little better.

NHL Powerplay Hockey
PSM 20 - 7/10 - Ice hockey sim
A sprinkling of skills sport into otherwise sturdy and playable effort.



Olympic Soccer
PSM 12 - 7/10 - Football sim
A realistic but accessible attempt at the footie game. Plenty of depth.

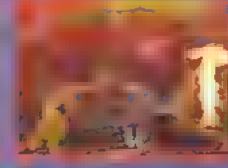
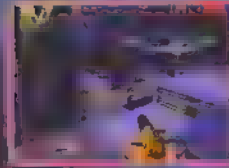
Onside Soccer
PSM 13 - 4/10 - Sports sim
Attempts to offer management and kickabout fun, fails on both counts.

OverBlood
PSM 12 - 6/10 - 3D adventure
An atmospheric opening, goes way too far in its spring adventure.

Pandemonium
PSM 14 - 9/10 - Platformer
Gorgeous-looking, quirky, a platformer. Derivative, but fun.

Panzer General
PSM 4 - 8/10 - Strategy game
The best command strategy game ever made from this platform.

Penny Racers
PSM 12 - 5/10 - Racers game
Outlet racer which lacks that elusive driving 'feel'. Abundantly average.



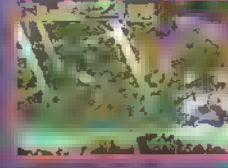
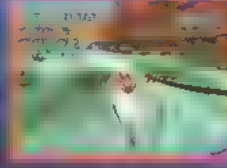
P0'ed
PSM 7 - 6/10 - Shoot 'em up
Glitchy 3D conversion with a few good ideas but nowhere to put them.

Porsche Challenge
PSM 13 - 8/10 - Racing game
Combines the exhilaration of an arcade stunt with the realism of a sim.

Power Move Pro Wrestling
PSM 14 - 4/10 - Wrestling sim
A poor attempt at realistic 3D wrestling. Lacks thrills and depth.

Power Serve Tennis
PSM 2 - 5/10 - Tennis sim
Couldn't have been much worse. Phil Richard sang between games.

Pro Pinball - The Web
PSM 5 - 7/10 - Pinball sim
Only offers one table, but sure plays like mean pinball anyway.



Raiden
PSM 2 - 7/10 - Shoot 'em up
Swivel arcade blast brought home with accuracy. Defeat, yes, but fun.

Rally Cross
PSM 21 - 8/10 - Racing game
Immensely frustrating at first, but does offer a considerable challenge.

Rapid Race
PSM 21 - 8/10 - Racing game
A challenging and fun racing game.

Rapid Relief
PSM 21 - 8/10 - Racing game
A challenging and fun racing game.

Ray Tracer
PSM 21 - 7/10 - Racing game
A fine arcade-style experience, which doesn't last long enough at home.



Blade Runner
PC
1997



Blade Runner
PC
1997



Blade Runner
PC
1997



Blade Runner
PC
1997



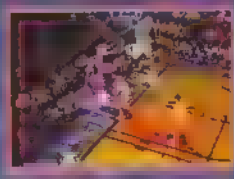
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Blade Runner
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Blade Runner
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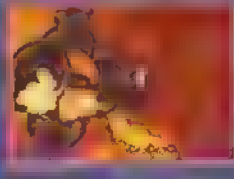
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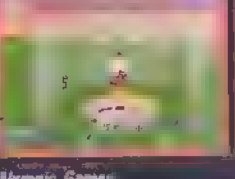
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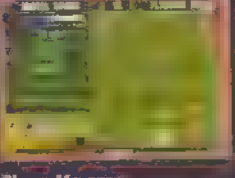
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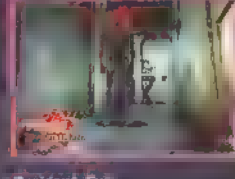
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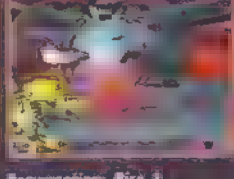
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Blade Runner
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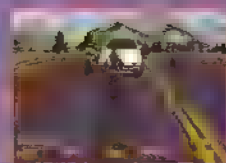
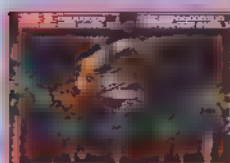


Blade Runner
PC
1997



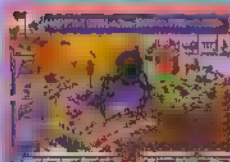
Blade Runner
PC
1997

PlayStation Present



Road Rage
PSM 10 - 6/10 - 3D racing sim

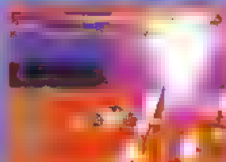
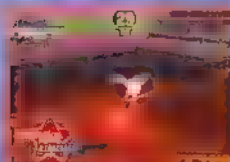
Road Rush
PSM 10 - 6/10 - 3D bike racing game



Smash Court Tennis

Soccer '97

Soul Blade



PSM 14 - 8/10 - 3D beat 'em up

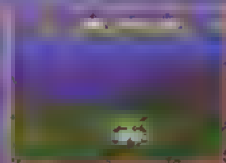
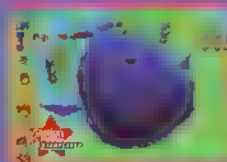
PSM 2 - 5/10 - Shoot 'em up

PSM 9 - 5/10 - Space combat

PSM 12 - 4/10 - Space racing game

PSM 13 - 6/10 - Shoot 'em up

PSM 5 - 8/10 - 2D beat 'em up



Theme Park

Transport Tycoon

Track & Field

Track & Field

Track & Field

Track & Field



Total NBA '97

Transport Tycoon

Track & Field

Track & Field

Track & Field

Track & Field



Rampage
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
A veritable one-off. Stuffed with detail and thrilling, addictive action.



Rebels
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
A veritable one-off. Stuffed with detail and thrilling, addictive action.



Sampras Extreme Tennis
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Sentient
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Shellsack
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Shock Wave Assault
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Space Hawk
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Space Jam
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Speedster
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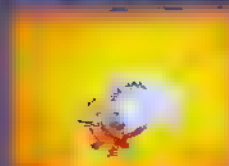
Spider
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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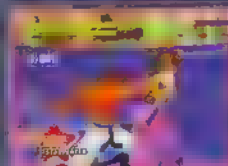
Spot Goes To Hollywood
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Striker '96
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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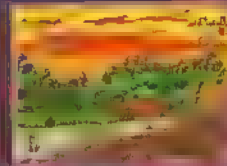
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Street Fighter The Movie
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Street Racer
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Strikepoint: The Hex Missions
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Striker '96
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Tekken
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Test Drive: Off Road
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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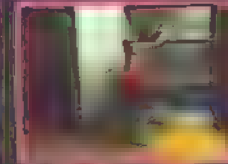
The City Of Lost Children
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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The Crow: City Of Angels
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
A veritable one-off. Stuffed with detail and thrilling, addictive action.



Total Eclipse
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
A veritable one-off. Stuffed with detail and thrilling, addictive action.



Total NBA '96
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Twisted Metal
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Ultimate Parodius Deluxe
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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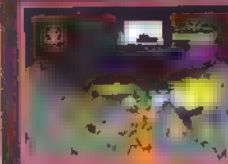
V-Rally
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Vandal-Hearts
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Victory Boxing
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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Viewpoint
PSM 17 9/10 - 3D adventure
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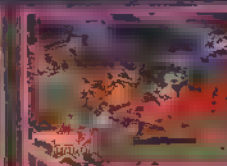
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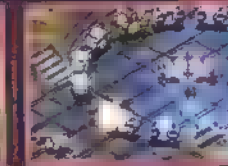
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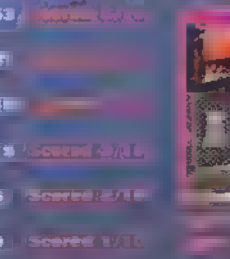
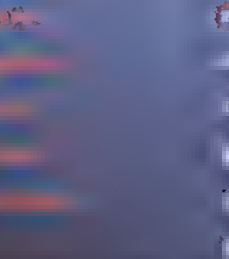
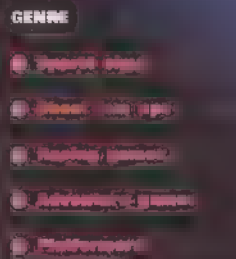
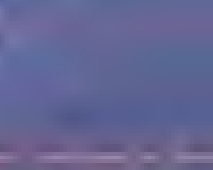
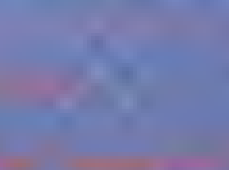
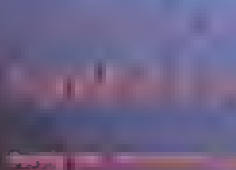
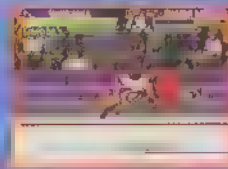
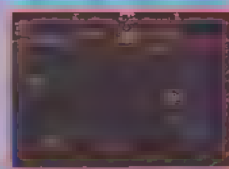
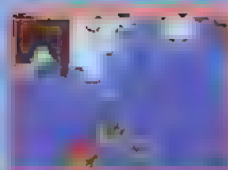
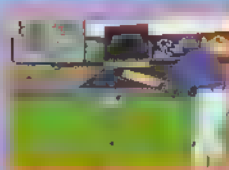
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GENRE

1. Action 94

2. Adventure 92

3. Racing 88

4. Adventure 86

5. Platform 85

THE SCORES

1. 94

2. 92

3. 88

4. 86

5. 85

THE SCORES

1. 94

2. 92

3. 88

4. 86

5. 85

THE SCORES

1. 94

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THE SHAPE OF THINGS

In December the PlayStation will

have reached the grand old age of three, the point at which many consoles are put out to pasture. However, Sony's machine continues to sell in its thousands each month, and developers are not yet ready to let it slip gently into that good night. But what does the PlayStation really have left to offer in the face of competition from the N64?

Perhaps surprisingly, most developers

believe the machine's full potential has yet to be realised. As John Laffeur, producer of *Pitfall 3D*, points out, there is a lot of power left to tap. With the release of the Program Analyser, kit developers are able to see exactly how their code is using every piece of the hardware. Interestingly, some of the top games on the market are being under-powered on the PlayStation.

Co-Editor, *Mr. G* (Konami) agrees. 'Expect to see better and better games in the future, probably with the ones that really push the machine, coming in '98 and '99.'

So, there is more to do.

Now, simply, climb the technical depths of the machine. The main strength of the N64 is not its power or the size of its software base, it's the magnificent gameplay offered by the likes of *Mario 64*, *Pillars of Eternity*, *N64* and *Star Fox 64*. Juan Montoya of SCEI recognises the importance of competing on the same level. Now that the level of technical and artistic achievement in games is quite high, 'Expect to see more focus being put on gameplay issues. Everyone has demonstrated that they can use art tools to produce great intros and high-quality backgrounds. The challenge now should be how to create addictive storylines and characters.'

It does seem as though developers are slowly heading this advice. *Ra Kappa The Rapper* certainly shows a change in direction for SCE in Japan, and in the UK, many forthcoming games are trying a few new ideas out. If more companies follow suit, the technical deficiencies of the machine compared to the N64 will become less of an issue.

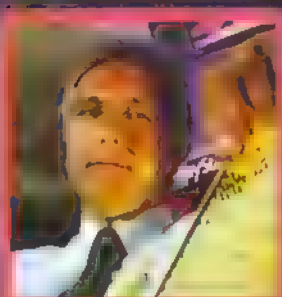
So then, if graphical progress continues and gameplay is pushed to the forefront, the PlayStation clearly has a few years left in it. Developers and gamers still love it, and the N64 isn't its only real competitor. As so cheap, that many people can afford to buy both. Almost every developer PSN spoke to about the machine is optimistic. Oliver Davies, of Eighth Wonder, sums up: 'Looking at the

COME?

state of the market, I see no reason why the PlayStation cannot continue as a viable platform for at least another three years, just as we thought.

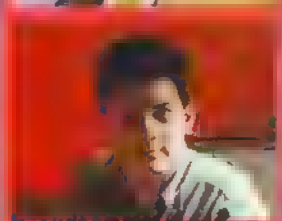
But what of PlayStation 2? Although Sony's president, Nobuyuki Idei, claims that a sequel will not be launched in Japan until at least December 1999, industry insiders are already excitedly discussing what we may be able to expect.

The main area of concern seems to be the CPU or 'brain' of the machine. Currently, the PlayStation has a 33MHz R3000A-Risc chip at its core, but as Nick Harper of Psychosis states, this really has seen better days. The new CPU will have to be far superior to the current chip. A lot of people think it's the graphics that cause chugging on the PlayStation, but quite often it's the AI processing which holds things up. ▶



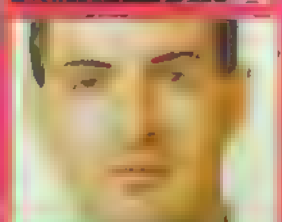
'My hope for PlayStation 2 is that it will enable developers to realise a closer sense of realism in the experience provided by future games. It should also make it possible to design and deliver new forms of immersive entertainment for the individual as well as groups based on a living room environment. Here I'm not just referring to games in the traditional sense but also to new forms of entertainment.'

JUAN MONTES, SCE



'I want the PlayStation 2 to support higher order geometry so that you can describe 3D scenes in less memory and have the polygons generated automatically. This is the future of high-end game software.'

JEZ SAN, MD, ARGONAUT



'We're looking, we're going to go for 10 times the power of the PlayStation. That's just a rough estimate, but I promise. We're also looking for DVD, MPEG2 support and Dolby Digital sound.'

DOMINIC MALLENSON, PSYCHOSIS



'I've been using another PlayStation for a few years. I've been in power. I hope Sony packs in everything and it turns on in a second when the lights in your house when you turn the sucker on.'

DAVE PERRY, SHINY ENTERTAINMENT



'Though power is enable the practical use of higher resolution, it is power for second with complex scenes, the game engine is definitely the way forward.'

MARTIN CHUDLEY, BIZARRE CREATIONS



'I don't think it's a new machine Sony need, it's better going to make two versions. In anyway, the PlayStation processor should be DVD-compatible with at least 10 times the muscle of the Nintendo 64.'

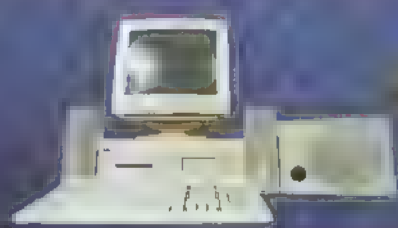
TONY MOTT, ASSOCIATE EDITOR, EDGE MAGAZINE



'It's be honest from a games player's point of view, it would be great to see Sony implementing some sort of solution to inspire developers to take more risk with innovative projects, expanding the market a bit. There are only so many racing games and beat 'em ups a world can take.'

NICK HARPER, PSYCHOSIS

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AS LIAM AND NOEL SEEM
TO PREFER GESTURES TO WORDS,
YOU'D EXPECT THEM TO
LIKE THE STATION WITH LESS TALK.





- 10** PSM is prepared to award a golden '10' to games which are perfect.
- 9** A splendid piece of software – recommended without prejudice.
- 8** Very, very good. Add it to your collection forthwith, if not sooner.
- 7** A great title with minor irritations, but still a worthy purchase.
- 6** A case of 'Why did they do that?'. Playable, but with some dodgy bits.
- 5** Straight average. Unoriginal or flawed, but still worth buying – just.
- 4** Below average. Probably has some serious gameplay or lifespan flaws.
- 3** Looking pretty bad. Maybe worth borrowing for a couple of days.
- 2** Borderline crap. Technically inept, poorly structured, and short-lived.
- 1** A product without merit. Not even beyond human endurance.
- 0** Black coffee coaster in the shape of a CD. Dreadful, awful tat.

 Special games which we think deserve to go on your 'must buy' list are also awarded our StarPlayer logo.

PlayTest

REVIEWED



| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| G-Police | 96 |  |
| Croc | 101 | |
| Total Drivin' | 105 | |
| Rapid Racer | 108 | |
| Hercules | 112 | |
| Street Fighter EX Plus α | 117 |  |
| Megaman Battle & Chase | 120 | |
| Nightmare Creatures | 123 | |
| Megaman 8 | 127 | |
| Frogger | 130 | |
| Devil's Deception | 132 | |

G-Police

It may be 2097, but on Callisto they don't have time for racing – they're much too busy trying to contain the evil mega-corporations



(1) Opportunities to hover menacingly abound. If anything moves down there, it's toast. (2) Can anything beat the feeling of bombing something to hell? Not much.

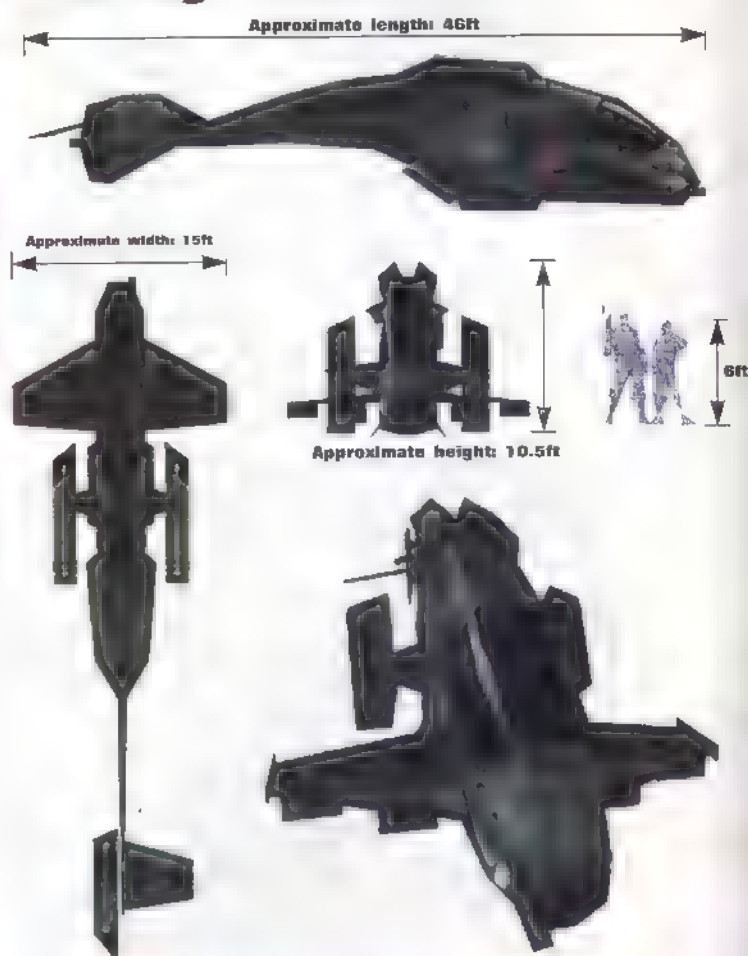


It's going to be the Christmas Number One. That was the confident prediction of Psygnosis' top bod, Ian Hetherington when we previewed *G-Police* in our June issue, but was he right? Well, it's not going to be that easy, especially with the ultra-heavyweight likes of *Final Fantasy VII*, *Formula One '97*, and – biggest of them all – *Tomb Raider 2*, all set to make their PlayStation debuts in the crucial pre-Christmas marketing melee. But now that we've seen the final version and played it until both fingers and ears were bleeding (it packs a powerful sonic punch), we have to admit the possibility, because *G-Police* is certainly a good enough game to grab the top spot over the holidays.

In fact, *G-Police* is a shining jewel of a game, combining a wonderfully intricate storyline with easily the best dogfighting and flying gameplay yet to appear on Sony's matt-grey marvel. The result is at once remarkably familiar, combining elements of *Syndicate Wars*, *Gunship 2000*, and even the old pre-PlayStation classic *Elite* into a practically seamless whole, and yet at the same time it breaks new boundaries, creating the feeling of an entire living city unfolding before you.

At its heart, though, *G-Police* is a flight sim. You pilot a G-Police Havoc Gunship, attempting to complete a series of missions. These vary from the hectic 'seek and destroy' variety through to more subtle details, like escorting limousines through the crowded roads, or tailing suspects across the city. Everything is wonderfully detailed – there are animated advertising hoardings (very reminiscent of *Syndicate Wars*) scattered around, there are towering, illuminated skyscrapers, there's a constant

Wreaking havoc



Tripping the light fantastic



The universe is a very different place in 2097. There are major colonies dotted throughout space developed by corporations in order to supply the ever-increasing quantity of raw materials required for life back on Earth.

G-Police: A shining jewel of a game

combining a wonderfully intricate

storyline with easily the best

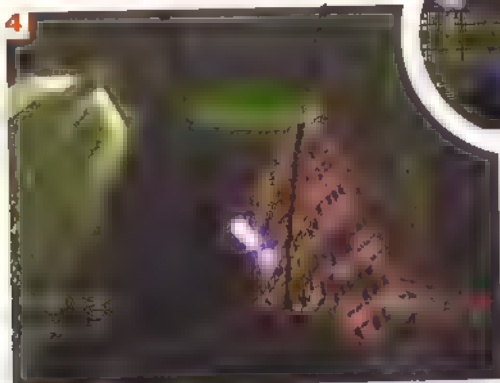
dogfighting and flying gameplay yet.



| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|
| PUBLISHER: | Psygnosis | DEVELOPER: | In-house |
| RELEASE DATE: | Late October | ORIGIN: | UK |
| PRICE: | £44.99 | STYLE: | Flight sim/shoot 'em up |



(1) Just like *Syndicate Wars*, the buildings are destroyable. Which is a very good thing indeed. **(2)** Although the game environment may look a little confusing in these grabs, it's very easy to understand when you're actually playing. **(3)** He ain't getting up from that. The number on the top right, surrounded by a circle, is the percentage of your shields intact. **(4)** Getting dizzy? Some of the skyscrapers are towering.



stream of traffic using the roads, and there's a massive variety of vehicles and enemies, from trains to out of control mechs to gang members on motorcycles to small, speedy aircars to giant hovering gunships. And that's just the first few levels.

But it's once you've finished gawping at the scenery and started to get involved in the action that *G-Police* really starts to show its class. The action is fast, thick and furious, illuminated by staggering explosions and ear-crunching effects. Once you've got the hang of flying the Havoc, you can really start to show off in one. One minute you can be hammering through crowded streets

G-Police plays like all the best

bits out of every helicopter film you've

ever seen, all thrown together into a

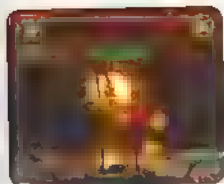
fantastically fluid game



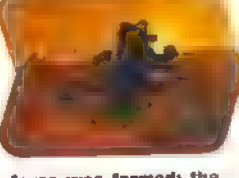
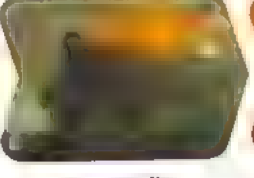
a mere 10 metres above the rush-hour traffic with an enemy aircar on your tail, rap d-fire bursts of gunfire spattering the streets to either side of

you; the next you can be weaving cautiously in and out of enormous high-tech skyscrapers as you attempt to lock a missile on to an enemy craft without being detected yourself. You can perform the most breathtaking bootleg turns in mid air to bring a pursuer suddenly into your sights, you can dive down under flyovers to find cover, you can rise menacingly from just underneath a rooftop to confront the enemy on top. *G-Police* plays like all the best bits out of every helicopter film you've ever seen, all thrown together into a fantastically fluid game environment that gives you near total control over the on going action.

As we've come to expect from Psygnosis, the presentation's extraordinarily slick as well. The storyline that develops is to do with some of the most stunning



Advertising is becoming increasingly sophisticated - in computer games too! If you hover in front of the advertising hoardings they slowly revolve. Like this.



These colonies are rough places, where the corporations tend to behave ruthlessly and exploitatively. To bring them into line, a new force was formed: the G-Police. However, the political will to fund the G-Police properly doesn't really exist, so they are massively underfunded and outgunned. The G-Police do their best within their limited framework, hiring combat veterans to fly their out-dated ex-military Havoc Gunships. You are one of these hardened pilots...

PlayTest

A plot of well planned and superbly executed videogame entertainment that hangs together beautifully and plays like a dream

► sequences we've ever seen on the PlayStation. The main characters are incredibly plausible, acting and sounding perfectly – even eerily – human. And the tale of massive deception and cynical corporate exploitation that emerges could be taken straight from a best-selling William Gibson novel. Of course, no story ever makes a computer game on its own, but the meshing of this engaging plot with the excellent gameplay that lies at the heart of *G-Police* acts as a great example to other developers of how it should be done.

As with all great games, *G-Police* takes the limitations of its platform and turns them into credible plot devices. For example, we all know that the PlayStation doesn't have a great deal of RAM and that this makes huge levels difficult for designers to accomplish, so the cities on Callisto are constructed of a series of inter-linked domes, each large enough to satisfy a great deal of exploration, but small enough to fit into the PlayStation's memory.

Enter one of the interlinking tunnels and the game

freezes – just for a second – while the next bit of data is loaded in. It's done so well that you'll hardly even notice it.

If there is going to be a technical criticism leveled at *G-Police*, however, it'll be about pop-up – the distance at which objects appear can sometimes feel a little close. For the most part this isn't really a problem, as the action's too quick for you to really notice it. If it does bother you, though, there are options to slow down the frame rate a little and increase the viewing distance, on top of which it actually fits in with the scenario – these city domes are pretty badly lit, and it doesn't feel like much of an inconsistency when you suddenly have things looming up at you out of the black. So we didn't find it too great a problem, but we suspect that other, more technically minded magazines will beat on about it. Don't worry, it doesn't really affect the gameplay.



[1] Aim. Fire. [2] The purple hexes mark the boundary of one of the inter-linked domes. Flying through them is impossible. [3] Swooping down out of the sun. Ack acka acka. Take that, Red Baron. Sorry, got a bit carried away there. [4] One of the tunnels that connects the domes. [5] Bang. [6] The overhead view is handiest when bombing. [7] Mmm, gorgeous textures ahoi.

Tripping the light fantastic



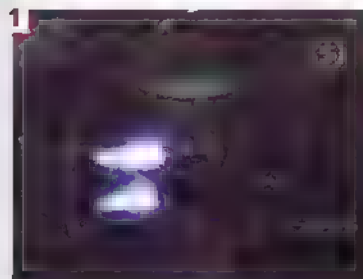
...with – of course – a bad disciplinary record. At the beginning of the game you are posted to Callisto, one of Jupiter's moons. Pretty soon it becomes apparent that something pretty major is in the offing on Callisto. The street criminals are being supplied with sophisticated, state-of-the-art weaponry and the situation looks like it may boil over out of control. With your limited resources and extraordinary flying skills, it's up to you to SAVE THE UNIVERSE.

G-Police

Toys for the boys



Not the greatest surprise, but *G-Police* has a vast array of weapons, with an increasing variety available to you throughout the course of the game. Our favourites include the Starburst, which fires a canopy of mini rockets that all home in on their target, the laser, which rips things apart with ease but overheats really quickly, and the EMP, which disables enemy vehicles with an electromagnetic pulse like those generated by a nuclear explosion. There are many more than we've had the space to show here, but then we wouldn't want to spoil any of the surprises, would we?



(1) That's nearly as good as the cinema, eh? (2) That's the last red light he'll run. Miscreant. (3) The radar at the top middle of the screen shows enemies' locations.



And with *G-Police*, the gameplay is a blast. There are over 30 missions to complete (plus a few secret ones that only become available if you perform all the other missions perfectly, so there's even an incentive to play it a second time); there's so much great cinematic stuff between the missions that it fills two CDs, and the overwhelming impression is of a piece of well-planned and superbly executed videogame entertainment that hangs together beautifully and plays like a dream.

Be warned, though, *G-Police* is not an after-the-pub shoot 'em up, and not at all the kind of thing you'll sit around playing with your mates. They may want to watch – *a la Tomb Raider* – as some of it is that good, but it's more likely that you'll be the one who wants to play it by yourself, because completing this game is going to require every ounce of concentration you've got. There's more than one instance where you'll be up against the clock, and when trying to complete

these missions one slip is all it takes. In fact, the intensity of the action and storyline combine to make this feel a bit more like an RPG than a straightforward action game. You quickly find yourself caught up in the story as well, as the sheer joy of zooming around the city, blasting criminal scumbags. Simply put, *G-Police* has everything – stunning visuals, crunching good sound, super slick presentation, a fascinating, imaginative setting and storyline, and edge of the seat gameplay that just won't let you go. You can expect to lose more than a couple of weekends to this sucker.

Alternatively...

| | | |
|----------------------|------|-------|
| <i>G-Police</i> | 0/10 | PSM25 |
| <i>Thunderhawk 2</i> | 0/10 | PSM8 |
| <i>Gunship 2000</i> | 0/10 | PSM8 |
| <i>Air Combat</i> | 0/10 | PSM1 |

The right stuff

The Havoc gunship is one of the most manoeuvrable pieces of machinery ever to appear in a PlayStation game, especially when combined with an Analog controller. But it does take quite a bit of mastering – flying the Havoc is initially as easy as open-heart surgery with one arm tied behind your back. Thankfully

Psygnosis has included a comprehensive set of training missions that soon get you to grips with all the basics. These begin by getting you used to flying the Havoc by racing through a course marked out by floating rings and chasing other pilots around. Then it's on to combat as you're introduced to the basic different types of

weaponry, and finally the trainer pitches you into some dogfights with increasingly difficult targets. Some people may scoff at training missions and prefer to get straight into the action, but *G-Police* really is one of those games where an hour spent learning the ropes will repay itself several times over in the course of the long campaign.

VERDICT

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | Superbly believable 9 | ■ GAMEPLAY: | Splendid, if dated 8 |
| ■ SOUND: | Ear-shattering 9 | ■ PRESENTATION: | Extra slick 9 |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | 30-40 hours solid play 9 | ■ ORIGINALITY: | Only in places 8 |

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 25

THE best flight sim/combat game currently available on the PlayStation. If you've been itching for thoughtful trigger action, this baby's the one for you.

9
out of 10

In the new issue of

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Dennis Bergkamp

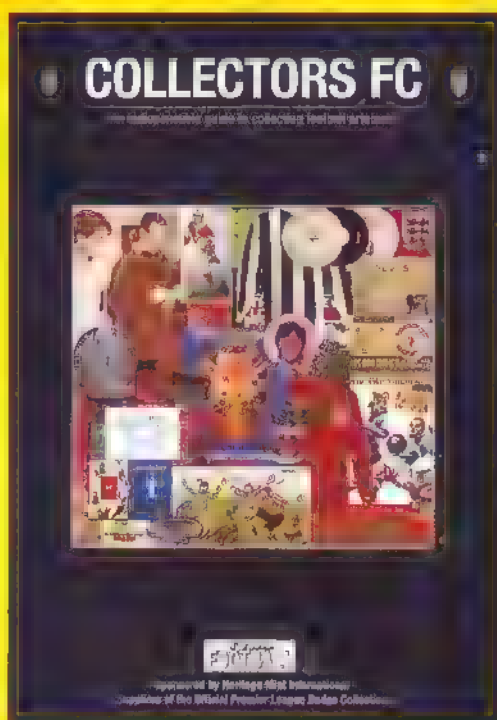
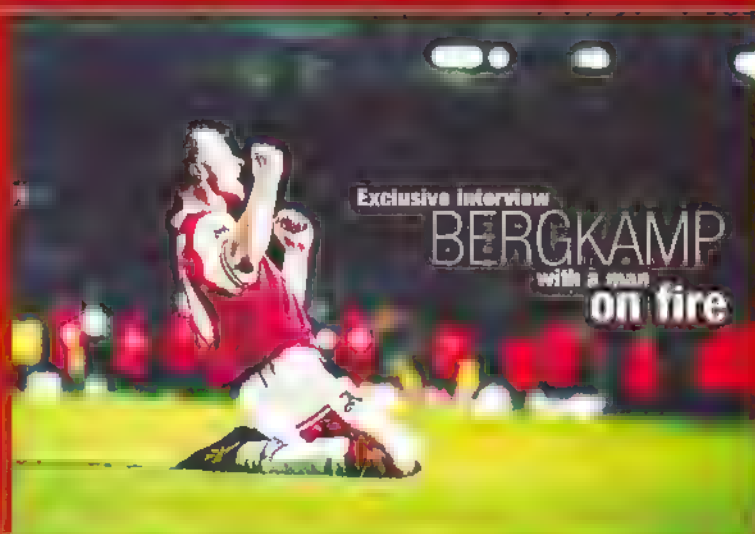
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| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|------------------|
| PUBLISHER: | Fox Interactive | DEVELOPER: | Argonaut |
| RELEASE DATE: | October | ORIGIN: | UK |
| PRICE | £44.99 | STYLE | 3D platform game |



Playtest

Intro



Welcome to the wonderful world of the Gobbos. In the FMV sequence at the beginning of the game you follow the early part of Croc's life and watch as he

Croc: Legend Of The Gobbos

With smooth-looking, finely detailed environments and abundant secret levels, *Croc* has been lauded as a *Mario 64* for the PlayStation. Can the reptile hero give the plumber a run for his money?



1 The ice levels. As well as having some great little graphical flourishes, they also look convincingly cold. Brrr. **2** This is the great sheep sub-game. The more times you get it right, the more lives you can earn. Odd, but fun.

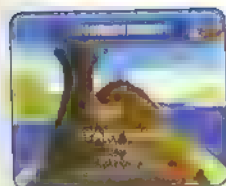


Ever since the advent of *Mario 64*, which many console owners believe to be the definitive 3D platformer, a niche in the gaming market has been recognised. Developers are currently striving to exploit the blatant lack of such a game for the PlayStation, attempting to produce a title of equal standard that will capture the attention of eager gamers. Fox Interactive are one such company, and with the help of Argonaut at the developing helm, they've produced a game which comes close.

Croc puts you in control of our eponymous hero, and after watching the scene-setting intro it's your job to travel around the six mythical worlds of the Gobbos and rescue them from the clutches of Baron Dante, the game's malevolent villain.

Upon loading the game, the first thing that strikes you is its high

polished appearance. There's a real cartoon-like atmosphere, with brightly coloured levels realised in exceptional detail. The early forest stages have such a solid appearance, almost devoid of polygonal clipping, that they have you wanting to explore from every angle. Later levels, which are accessed by a map screen as you progress, are equally attractive. Many contain clever little flourishes, such as the transparent ice blocks and the way you leave footprints in the snow on the ice levels. Argonaut have also used Gouraud shading, which, they claim, 'linearly interpolates the colour shade of one surface normal to other adjacently ▶



There's a real cartoon-like atmosphere;

realised in exceptional detail

PLAYSTATION



acquires all of the skills which you'll be using in the game. However, it's not long before the dastardly Dante decides to put an end to the Gobbo's idyllic

such as platforms which can float in
levels enshrouded in darkness

► connected surface normals'. Translated into English, this basically means that when Croc is standing next to lava, for instance, he'll glow a shade of red as if the lava were illuminating him.

Our equally impressive hero, made up of some 200 polygons, can perform a number of different manoeuvres which he does in his own charming style.

The way he jumps, tail-swipes, hangs on to platforms, swims, pushes blocks, backs up, flips and climbs walls have all been animated superbly.

The sound complements the gameplay, too. Gone are the repetitive dirges of platformers past. *Croc* contains two hours of original music, some of which is really rather good, especially the salsa tunes on the desert levels. Croc also has a smattering of speech which accompanies his tail-attack. Apart from that, the sound effects are quite sparse, with only the Dantinos (Dante's little helpers) making sound of any note, giggling just before they attack. More chirps and other speech would have been nice.

In his bid to rescue the Gobbos, Croc must undertake the usual platform shenanigans

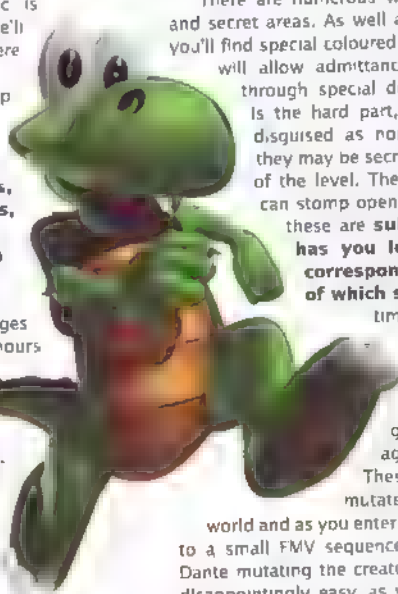
Collecting 100 crystals and discovering hearts gain him extra lives, jumping on boxes reveals the contents, jumping on switches make platforms appear, and so on. But *Croc* also contains new elements, such as platforms which can be made to float in any direction, balloon lifts and levels that are enshrouded in darkness. Some also require a certain amount of swimming, but generally these underwater areas are relatively uneventful and easy to complete.

There are numerous ways to unlock bonus levels and secret areas. As well as the normal white crystals you'll find special coloured ones which, when gathered, will allow admittance to the said secret areas through special doors. Finding these crystals is the hard part, though. Sometimes they're disguised as normal gems, at other points they may be secreted in some far flung corner of the level. There are also wells which you can stomp open to access extra areas. Often these are sub games, one of which has you leaping on to switches corresponding to three wells out of which sheep pop up. Successful

timing will make the sheep disappear, and the more times you get it right, the better the bonus.

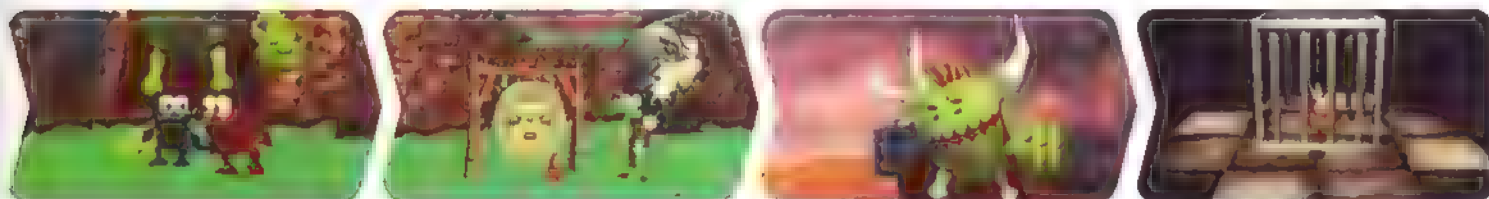
At the end of each group of levels you're pitted against an end-of-level boss. These take the form of magically mutated inhabitants of the Gobbos

world and as you enter the boss levels, you're treated to a small FMV sequence which shows the dastardly Dante mutating the creatures. Completing the levels is disappointingly easy, as you only need to race to the end of the level to tail-swipe the gong (the goal of each level). However the real challenge comes from completing the levels, collecting all the captured Gobbos, then defeating the boss. This, in turn, opens up a secret level which contains a piece of a jigsaw puzzle; find all the pieces and a whole new island appears, adding longevity to an already huge game.

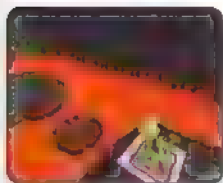


[1] More sheepy fun. [2] One of the wells which give entrance to a small secret area. On top is one of the six Gobbos you must rescue on each level. [3] Croc truly is a delight to behold. The graphics make full use of the PlayStation's polygon-shifting capabilities and there's virtually no clipping to be seen. [4] Croc approaches one of the underwater obstacles. It's simply a matter of timing - just keep swimming and it'll soon be over. Shame.

Croc



existence, stamping his own authority on them. Following tradition, he imprisons the Gobbos, leaving you to rescue them. Well, go on then....



Croc is one of the few games at present which is compatible with the new Analog pad, allowing you to control Croc's field of vision with the right stick and his movement with the left. We found that it worked well, up until the point we tried to turn Croc on the spot and discovered this was almost impossible without taking steps forward. This proved to be a bit of a nightmare when trying to perform the simplest of jumps, so we found ourselves sticking to the digital controls.

Sadly, this little glitch is one of a few which mar this perfectly good game. The fact that the camera would often get wedged on the walls, providing some really obscure viewing angles, would turn certain parts into leaps of faith. This problem aside, it's also often very difficult to judge distances and a policy of trial and error has to be employed at the cost of a life. To

completing the levels, collecting all the!

This, in turn, opens up a secret level...

offset this, you do have a choice of three camera angles, but these are not always helpful.

The plethora of enemies also tend to be fairly easy to kill off, which means that opportunities to make players feel as if they have triumphed with superior skill and timing have been missed out (an ingredient abundant in good platformers). This problem is endemic of the game as a whole and, along with the cute graphics, it would be fair to liken Croc to a children's Tomb Raider.

Unfortunately Croc doesn't quite hit the mark in terms of challenging the player. There are the odd difficult moments, but generally with a few attempts and the never-ending supply of continues, it is possible to finish the game without real trouble, despite its 200 levels.



Alternatively...

| | | |
|-----------------|------|-------|
| Crash Bandicoot | 9/10 | PSM10 |
| Paedagogium | 9/10 | PSM14 |
| Jumping Flash 2 | 9/10 | PSM12 |
| Platform Game | 9/10 | PSM14 |
| Croc | 7/10 | PSM25 |



(1) With a hearty 'Wazam!' Croc enters a hidden level. (2) Pushing blocks is sometimes paramount to the successful completion of certain levels. (3) The first level and really nothing more than a training level. It introduces you to most of the elements you'll find throughout the game. (4) A Gobbo.

Mutant monsters



At the end of each set of levels, you're treated to a small FMV sequence which shows Dante mutating the innocent inhabitants of the Gobbos' world into these monsters. Providing you're skilful enough with the pad and have an idea of what to do, they're pretty easy to defeat - though the fishy-boss, about halfway through the game, proves to be a really frustrating adversary. Watch out for his fireballs and keep using the flip button.

VERDICT

- GRAPHICS: Solid, colourful and cute 9
- GAMEPLAY: Fun. Let down by glitches 7
- SOUND: Great music, average effects 7
- PRESENTATION: Polished to a sheen 8
- LIFESPAN: Ultimately too simple 7
- ORIGINALITY: Children's Tomb Raider 7

Superb graphics and fine presentation are the upside to this entertaining *Mario*-ette. Had the level design been a little more innovative, then who knows...

7
out of 10

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| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|--------------|-----------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Ocean | ■ DEVELOPER: | Eutechnyx |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ PRICE | £44.99 | ■ STYLE: | Racing |



Playtest

Total Drivin'

Rejoice, for the wheel has been reinvented!

It's no longer polygonal but round, but that doesn't mean it works any better...



[1] Hit the walls and really watch the sparks fly (well, you can just see 'em). [2] Scenery looks good, though not in split-screen mode. [3] Although it's easy to drive from 'behind the wheel', the chase mode gives a good view of the road. [4] Now there's a surprise for a race game - tunnels. [5] Ending up the wrong way. Again.



When the press blurb makes a big issue about the wheels on the cars being genuinely round, you have to wonder how good a racing game is going to be. Why not make a song and dance about the speed of the graphics? Or the accuracy of the courses? Or the dramatic sound effects? Well, in truth, the press material that came with our review copy of *Total Drivin'* did punch on about all of those elements and a whole bunch more, but the round wheels was the one which caught our attention. Round wheels. Now there's a novel idea.

What is novel, however, is the way that *Total Drivin'* blends not one, not two, but five different classes of

car, each of which races around appropriate track styles. There are race cars, like the kind of thing we're all used to driving in the *Ridge/Rage Racer* series, which are tied to road tracks in Japan; there are Indy cars for the total speed experience, also on road courses; there are buggies, which you get to bounce over dunes in Easter Island and Egypt; there are Dakar Rally buggies, for similar environments; and finally there are rally cars which race around the Scottish Highlands and the Swiss Alps. That's a lot of driving styles to master, and it's the hook that this game has over pretty well every other racer on the PlayStation.

But, as the adage goes, you can be a jack of all trades without being a master of one (or something similar). So to what extent does this saying apply to *Total Drivin'*? Let's take each of the car types and their locations in some approximation of an order...



[1] A total of 36 tracks make up the game, though there are six core courses of which the others are variations. [2] Spin-outs in the chicanes.

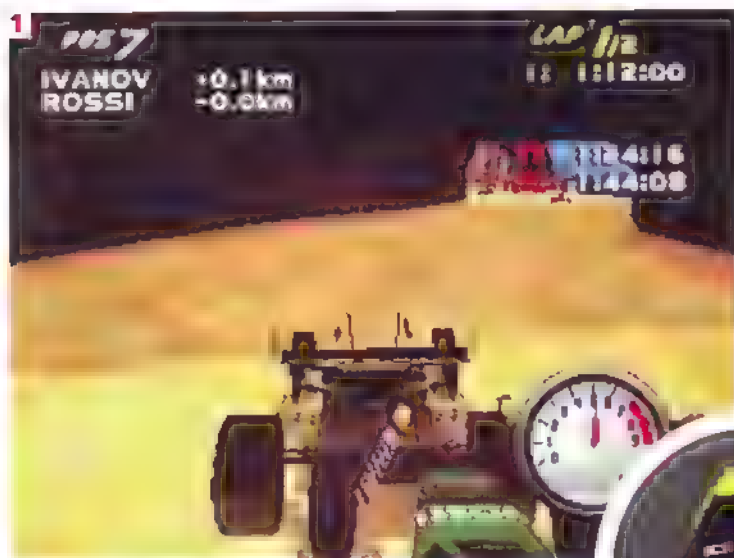
Total Drivin' blends not one,

not two, but five different classes of car,

each of which races around

appropriate track styles.

PlayTest



[1] The buggy courses are the most fun – there's plenty of rear-end action and the sand makes for some excellent slides. [2] Be careful, however, not to fall off the edge [3] Collisions come often, and they're never soft affairs. [4] And as for the total wipeouts... well, they're spectacular efforts too.



► The race cars, which you drive on the Japanese and Russian circuits, are perhaps the most disappointing. Although the sense of speed is there, the cars handle a little too easily, even when you get through the first course and on to the second, which is raced in the rain. The cars turn sharply (especially when using the 'hard turn' buttons on the shoulders of the pad) and spin-outs are difficult to achieve unless you're really driving like a nutter. The level of challenge is not a



It's not so gloomy when it comes to driving the buggies, though, for these are far more fun. The dry, bumpy desert courses of Easter Island and Egypt make for a good laugh as well as a great drive. Drifting your buggies around wide expanses of sand, bouncing them off banked walls and hurtling them through darkened tunnels is a right hoot, though these are tough cars to handle. They tip over easily and are slow to get going again, so winning a race is about keeping your cool and taking it as steady as you can. Boy racer tactics result in broken egos.

And if you thought the buggies were tough, just wait until you've progressed on to the excellent Dakar Rally cars. These super-dune buggies bounce and shift



[1] The rally cars are easiest to handle at speed, providing the track's dry. [2] The race cars slide, though. [3] And all the lights are rather poor.

Drifting your buggies around wide expanses of sand, bouncing them off banked walls and hurtling through darkened tunnels is a right hoot.

patch on *Rage Racer* and consequently this section of the game isn't as much fun.

The reverse applies when you progress on to the Indy cars. Not a million miles away from Formula One cars in the way they handle, the Indy vehicles are an absolute bitch to drive – they've got all the straight line speed and acceleration you could possibly hope for (and a little bit more), but trying to slow down and get around corners is one hell of a task. What's more, because you sit so low in the things, you can't really make out the corners until you're on top of them unless you use the chase mode or spend a long time memorising every bend of every course – and that could take some time. It is, however, at least realistic.

Total Drivin'

all over the shop, making even completing the course a mammoth task, let alone doing well in the race order. They flip over easily, making each race very much a roller-coaster ride, and are slow in comparison to the other classes.

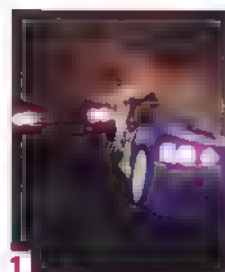
Finally we have the rally cars, which do a good impression of the cars you're no doubt used to driving in *V-Rally*. Although not as tricky to handle as Infogrames' modern classic, the amount of rear-end drift, sharp cornering abilities and high top-speed are all spot-on. The courses, which are based in the Highlands and in the Alps, are all extremely demanding too, requiring huge amounts of concentration and rapid adjustments in driving style to complete successfully. Of all the classes of car available in the game, we'd have to say that the rally cars are the most rewarding to drive.

What are not quite so rewarding, however, are the graphics. Although initially impressive, they don't have the detail or the finesse of either *Rage Racer* or *V-Rally*. Tough comparisons, but the driving games market

is a fiercely fought one, and you've got to excel in all areas to come out near the top. The speed of the games is well up to scratch, there's no doubting that, but the background detail does seem a bit blocky and many of the road textures look all wrong.

The music, on the other hand, is up there with the very best that any videogame has to offer – providing, of course, you like techno. Rivaling even *Wipeout 2097* with its big-name bands, the full-on dance music employed by the coders of *Total Drivin'* is catchy, appropriate and, for once, actually adds something positive to the game. The sound effects suffer a bit, though – the music's so good you feel obliged to turn it way up in the mix.

This game's winning ticket is its variation. There are 40 different cars to drive (five different types and eight international teams, each of which has cars that handle slightly differently), there are 36 tracks to tackle arranged over the six countries, and as you progress through the game, the hazards on the tracks become increasingly diverse (dodge avalanches, lava explosions and rock slides). There's also a decent spread of game modes – race against seven other CPJ cars, against yourself in time trials, or take on human opponents in split-screen and link up modes. But its variation is also its weakness. *Total Drivin'* doesn't quite hang together as a single game; instead it feels like a collection of different driving games, each of varying enjoyment. It's good, but not in the same masterful way that *Rage Racer* or *V-Rally* are. *Total Drivin'* has spread itself just a little too thin, and fails to score that little bit higher as a result.



1



2

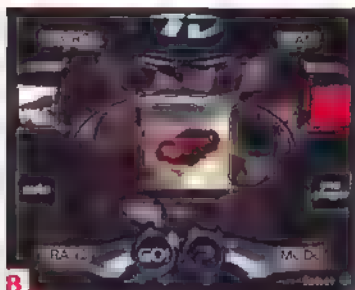


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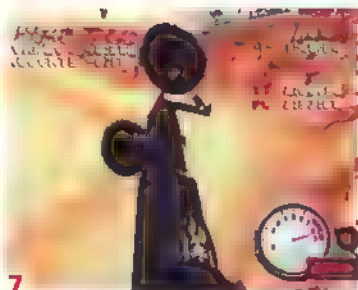
(1) No, not an in-game graphic. Shame. (2) Into the darkness. (3) Note the cool waterfall to the right.



4



5



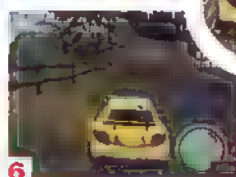
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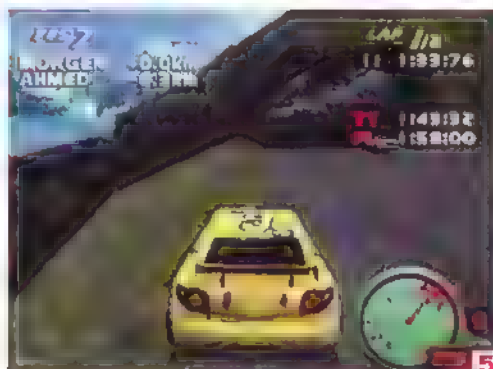
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9



10



11

(1) Use the 'hard turn' button to ease the sports cars round tight corners. (2) More buggy-related fun. (3) Over the wooden bridge and off to the pyramids. (4) This is, in fact, the middle of a forest, though it is a bit dark for the middle of the afternoon. (5) The true 3D environment means you can drive off the edge here, should you have a death wish. (6) Hit the grass verges too hard and you're sure to flip. (7) Just like this, in fact. (8) Choose which of six international teams you want to race for.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Not that refined 7

■ GAMEPLAY:

Extremely varied 8

■ SOUND:

Superlative techno 9

■ PRESENTATION:

Could be better 7

■ LIFESPAN:

Enormous 9

■ ORIGINALITY:

Pick 'n' mix 6

An extremely competent driving game with huge variety in tracks and car types. But its varying quality throughout those types hinders its overall enjoyability.

8
out of 10

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 25

Alternatively...

| | | |
|----------------------|------|-------|
| <i>Rage Racer</i> | 8/10 | PSM21 |
| <i>V-Rally</i> | 8/10 | PSM21 |
| <i>Total Drivin'</i> | 8/10 | PSM25 |

Playtest!



(1) The 'standing on the back of your boat' view gives a great sense of speed. (2) When the going gets rough, the boats start bouncing... (3) The massive outboard engines are nicely animated. (4, 5) Controlling a high-power speedboat isn't as easy as you might think. (6) The AI of the computer opponents is very good. (7) The start of race sequence is impressive.

Rapid Racer

Take *Ridge Racer*, remove the tires, smooth off the bottom of the car and make the roads all runny. And now you've broken *Racer*, why not try *Rapid* the car and your copy of *Ridge Racer* instead.



cars are great. They're sexy to look at, responsive to control and exciting to drive.

And they also make superb simulations, since when you're driving (sitting down, holding the wheel), you're doing the same thing as when you play a racing game (sitting down, holding the controller).

So why the HELL would you want to drive a bloody boat? Boats are slow, ugly, unresponsive, covered in barnacles (probably) and sit in that horrible wet stuff. Well, the ones we've been in are

Fortunately, the boats in *Rapid Racer* aren't quite that bad. They're quick, good-looking and unresponsive (well, you can't have everything). So the change in



Rapid Racer isn't to power-slide round corners as you would in *Ridge* or *Porsche*, but to plough round the ever-tightening river bends while keeping your

hull off the bank

There are few frills in *Rapid Racer*. It's basically *Ridge* (or *Rage*) *Racer* on water, though you can run into power-ups which provide you with a much-needed turbo boost. A lot of the tactical play comes in deciding whether it's worth skirting close to the shore in order to pick up a turbo, or keeping on the straight 'n' narrow and risk being overtaken round the next bend. Ooh, tricky one...

Before the start of a race, you get a choice of three speedboats, each boasting superior handling, speed or acceleration - though not all three. As you progress, you earn the right to board bigger, more powerful, and much more dangerous craft, just like in *Rage Racer*. Likewise, you only get few courses to choose from at the beginning, but if you rank highly enough in these you gain access to bigger, twistier, and more dangerous ones. Nothing too innovative there, then

It's basically *Ridge* (or *Rage*) *Racer* on

into power-ups.

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|--------------|----------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | SCEE | ■ DEVELOPER: | SCEE |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | Out now | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ PRICE: | £34.99 | ■ STYLE: | 3D racing game |



[1] Given how hard it is to control your speedboat, just overtaking gives you a real sense of achievement. **[2]** Of course, it doesn't always go the way you hope...

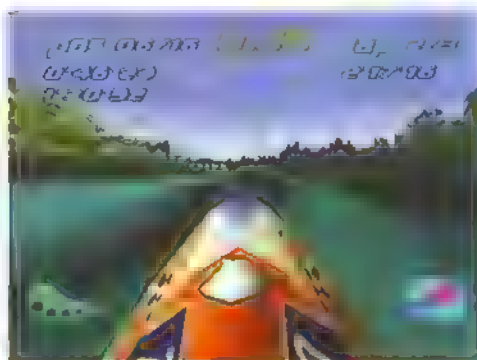
coding prowess by modelling the
and using high-res mode



There's also the compulsory head-to-head mode, which offers some long-term fun and, for all you solo speedsters, there's a time trial mode. Put up your best performance on a single lap, and your every move is then memorised and used to provide a 'ghost' opponent.

As you begin the next lap, you find yourself racing against your own best time in the shape of a wire-frame boat. It may sound a bit sad, but as you hone your skills, you'll find yourself shaving off tenths of a second each lap – and these 'ghost' races are a ways close affairs.

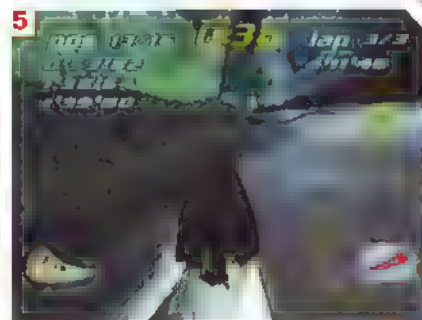
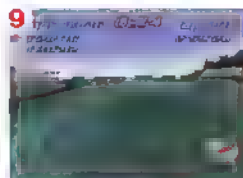
But apart from this, *Rapid Racer* is a pretty, erm, shallow game. Technically, SCEE has tried to show off its coding prowess by modelling the physical properties of water and using high-res mode. Admittedly, it's a smooth, pixel-free environment, but any attempts at ►



Even the simple courses are liberally sprinkled with obstacles like this rapidly-approaching bank of earth. You have to pay attention all the time.

MORE GUTS MORE GLORY

NOVEMBER 1997



(1, 2) This boat handles best, but is also the slowest. Surprise. (3) This sleek design is very fast but impossible to steer. (4) Fighting for power-ups is common. (5) There are some good lighting effects. (6) No, left, I said, left, left! (7) The full-screen view can make you seasick. (8) An opponent runs over a mine. Shame. (9) The arrow warns you about a boat right behind.

that looks like it's actually on water.
you have to turn to Nintendo's succulent jetski jaunt, *Wave Race*.

► producing realistically running water are reduced to making a swirly looking road that won't keep still. A few of the courses look quite effective, but occasionally you get one which looks like you're coursing through swirling sewage. Very unpleasant. Some of the courses even have very un-watery-looking slopes in them. Sadly (and it really does grieve us to say so), if you really want a water-borne game that looks like it's actually on water, you have to turn to Nintendo's succulent jetski jaunt, *Wave Race*.

As is *de rigueur* for race games, there are three views on offer - above the boat (standard view), in the boat (you just see the nose), and perched on the prow of the boat (you can't see the boat at all). The standard view is probably best for racing, though the 'prow' view gives the best



Commit your friends to a watery grave...



Thankfully two-player, split-screen modes are now becoming the norm for PlayStation games. This is a good thing for both us gamers and the software companies themselves because, as *Rapid Racer* proves, even a mediocre racing game can be great fun when you're competing against a friend...

VERDICT

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

■ GRAPHICS:

Not quite fluid enough 6

■ GAMEPLAY:

Steer left, steer right... 5

■ SOUND:

Four-forty funkadelic 7

■ PRESENTATION:

As slick as ever 8

■ LIFESPAN:

Lacks depth 5

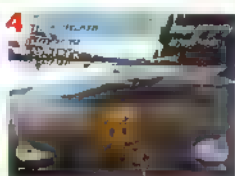
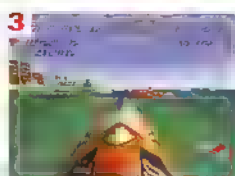
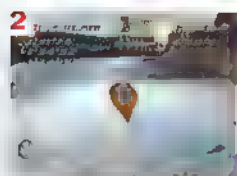
■ ORIGINALITY:

Racing. On water 4

An exercise in creative coding rather than a serious attempt at thrilling gameplay. Unusual, clever, but a bit more *Vapid Racer* than *Rapid Racer*.

6
out of 10

Rapid Racer



(1) Trying to cut corners is all well and good, but you've got to be careful not to cut them too much... (2-4) The small indicator to the left shows your power-up and damage status, while the one on the right displays speed.

Alternatively...

| | | |
|------------------------|------|-------|
| V-Rally | 8/10 | PSM1 |
| Rage Racer | 8/10 | PSM21 |
| Wipeout 2097 | 8/10 | PSM12 |
| Ridge Racer | 8/10 | PSM1 |
| Porsche Challenge | 8/10 | PSM19 |
| Ridge Racer Revolution | 8/10 | PSM6 |
| Wipeout | 8/10 | PSM1 |
| Rapid Racer | 8/10 | PSM25 |

sensation of speed. However, the 'in-boat' view is most notable for its incredibly unrealistic portrayal of the boat itself, boasting a big pointy thing sticking up into the screen. How we chuckled.

Our major gripe with *Rapid Racer*, though, is the actual handling of the speedboats. They sit on top of the water (as you'd expect), but don't really feel like they're sitting in it, or reacting to it. Collisions with the bank are a bit random, in that sometimes you bounce off with a splash, while other times you'll go hurtling through the air like Pierce Brosnan's stunt man on a bad day. Contact with other craft is also poorly handled, as the boats simply run into one another, crossing bows haphazardly and then being forced apart by forces unknown. It kind of feels like you're in a speedboat... but not much.

In the final analysis, *Rapid Racer* is little more than a novelty – a well-designed and nicely coded one, but a novelty all the same. If you want a racing game, go for *V-Rally*, *Rage Racer* or *Porsche Challenge*, and if you want something with a high-speed twist, try *Wipeout 2097*. And get a mate to chuck water at you whenever you crash.



(1) Winning a race treats you to a nice tracking camera sequence. *Rapid Racer* may not be the best-looking game ever, but there are some nice effects every now and then. (2) Hitting the side of the course tends to have fairly random effects, which aren't helped by the tendency to oversteer...

LET'S ROCK

NOVEMBER 1997

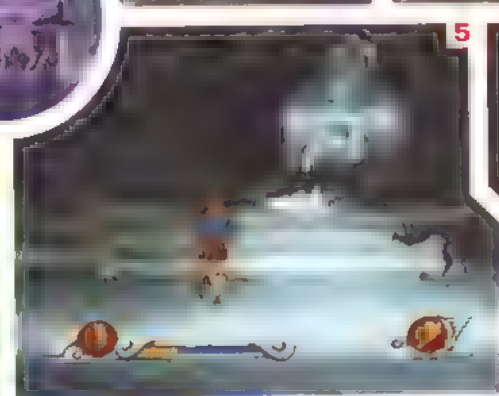
Playings!



Hercules

Having conquered the feature-length animation market, Disney is now setting its sights on the profitable videogames arena. We see whether beneath the visual gloss lies a decent game adaptation

(1) Obstacles such as these aren't a problem for Hercules, who loves an opportunity to show off the extent of his strength. (2) However, the side of a cliff might prove over-ambitious, requiring a pride-swallowing climb instead. (3) Getting your sword out now would be a good thing. (4) Herc's journey will see you travelling through strange and sinister worlds. (5) Run!



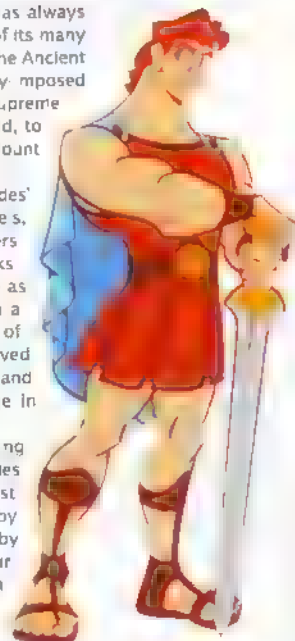
Traditionally, past Disney licences have been commercial successes, though often at the expense of gameplay and other such fundamental gaming elements, with publishers fully aware that the strength of the brand alone will guarantee the sales. As a result, there's been a tendency to rush a title's release to coincide with the publicity generated by the animated film version, and more often than not, the consequent products have been simple platform affairs, displaying little in terms of innovation. The fact that *Hercules* will appear on the shelves in time to revel in the hype surrounding the forthcoming film is therefore unlikely to prove a heart-stopping occurrence. **The fact that it's actually considerably better than previous efforts, however, just might.**

Without the need for an elementary course in Greek mythology, the plot goes thus: Hades, ruler of the Underworld and all-round bad guy, has plans to extend his control over the more serene and healthy atmosphere

of the world of the living, which until now has always enjoyed the protection of the most powerful of its many gods, Zeus. Once the latter falls from power, the Ancient Greeks understandably object to the newly imposed tyranny. They turn to Hercules, son of the supreme being and popular chap of this mythical world, to battle the dark side in the hope of saving Mount Olympus from an eternal reign of terror.

To achieve this, players have to face Hades' army of minions over 10 action-packed levels, spanning three differing worlds. The designers have no doubt been inspired by the 12 tasks the 'real' Hercules is said to have undergone as punishment for slaying his wife and kids in a fit of madness inflicted by Juno, Queen of Heaven (artistic licence again having saved Disney from a potentially tricky situation, and presumably this all happens at a later stage in our hero's life anyway).

And so it is that, initially armed with nothing more than a sword and those legendary muscles for protection, our hero sets off into the first level, essentially a training mode. Guided by Phil (an irritating pig-like creature voiced by Danny DeVito), players can first test their sword-wielding and punching skills on stationary targets before slowly progressing on to real enemies and other activities such



have altered the perspective. Level two sees

runs and jumps into the screen



| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Disney Interactive | ■ DEVELOPER: | Eurocom |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ ORIGIN: | United States |
| ■ PRICE: | £39.99 | ■ STYLE: | Platform adventure |

[1] The 'run into the screen' 3D levels present players with a variety of energy-sapping obstacles to avoid. [2] As well as avoiding these, many items are dotted throughout the path, awaiting collection.



given the chance to move between 'layers'

the game a 3D aspect



as rock throwing and cliff climbing. Seasoned gamers will find the exercise trivial but it does give younger players (surely the game's target audience) a chance to get to grips with the controls.

But Hercules has more than just his blade and fists at his disposal to help him in his quest. A power punch which requires a few seconds of 'powering up' is possible, and indeed vital in clearing the path of obstructions such as pillars or boulders, thereby allowing further progression.

Also, gifts from the Gods can be found throughout the levels, and these power up young Hercules' sword so that it gains the ability to fire a limited number of thunder bolts, fire bursts, or 'energy rings'. These can then be deployed on the more resilient enemies, thereby negating the risk of close combat. In addition, energy boosts and health meter extensions can also be found as players battle through the levels, as well as the obligatory secret areas and hidden bonuses.



[1] There is a three-dimensional element to the game, but movement in and out of the screen is only allowed along certain paths. [2] Many of the game's enemies are understandably based on Greek mythology. [3] There's no shortage of secret areas.

SHAKE IT BABY

NOVEMBER 1997



(1) Bosses such as the multi-headed Hydra will require all of your slaying skills. **(2, 3)** On the other hand, Medusa calls for a different approach, while taking care of her minions. **(4)** Chopping off one of Hydra's heads results in a shower of green goo.



long, but their lack of difficulty is even on

trouble an average player's sleep!



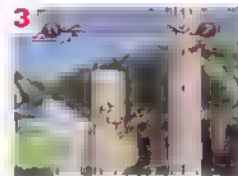
► Rather than simply stick to stage after stage of side-scrolling action, commendably the developers have introduced an element of variety by altering the perspective. This means that the second level, for example, will see players negotiating hazardous obstacles as Hercules runs and jumps into the screen (similar to *Crash Bandicoot*). Later levels also adopt this approach – a particularly impressive example has Hercules running through the streets of ancient Athens towards Cyclops, a gigantic monstrosity intent on ending the hero's trek by throwing large pieces of Greek architecture at him.

Furthermore, certain levels consist only of a major boss – such as the tenacious Hydra, a deadly multi-headed creature, or the infamous Medusa – which again provides a welcomed change of pace from the potential monotony of an endless procession of similar stages. Also, not content with producing a mundane 2D platform romp, in certain sections of the levels players are given the chance to move between several 'layers' of the scenery, effectively giving the game a 3D aspect. But readers expecting the amount of freedom offered in *Tomb Raider* will feel disappointed (and restricted) by the fact that movement between these is limited, proving only possible along particular paths

marked out on the stage's scenery

Which brings us to the graphics. Visually, the game appears very reminiscent of its cinematic version, which is hardly surprising considering the developers have (for the first time) worked in conjunction with the film animators to capture the right atmosphere, and *Hercules* certainly displays all of the renowned characteristics usually associated with Disney's productions. The animation is fluid and the stages are beautifully coloured, with detailed backgrounds displaying plenty of variety, and FMV (presumably from the film) carrying the narrative between the levels.

Some will, of course, complain that the game's overly childish, but there are genuinely humorous occasions which encompass all age groups, and even the most hardened PlayStation owner will find something to like about this title.



(1) There are plenty of opportunities to power up the vital energy bar. **(2)** At several stages throughout the levels, Hercules will face tougher enemies, although disposing of these isn't always immediately apparent. **(3)** Always the showman, Hercules will stop at nothing to show off his athletic skills.

VERDICT

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 25

■ GRAPHICS:

Slick **8**

■ GAMEPLAY:

Fun while it lasts **7**

■ SOUND:

Atmospheric **8**

■ PRESENTATION:

Disney-like **8**

■ LIFESPAN: Too easy, not enough levels **5**

■ ORIGINALITY:

Not really **5**

An accomplished title whose easy nature results in a frustratingly short-lived experience for most, but is nevertheless sure to appeal to a younger PlayStation audience

6
out of 10

Hercules

The game's bosses, like all of the other characters in *Hercules*, are well animated and shouldn't prove a problem, even for inexperienced players.



Sadly, although enjoyable, the experience is a short one, with the majority of adequate players being able to finish the game in a couple of sittings, and of those only the younger ones are likely to engage in repetitive play. The levels are often adequately long, but their lack of difficulty – even on 'Herculean' setting – is unlikely to trouble an average player's sleep.

Come release time, Disney will no doubt again work its magic on the less discerning younger market bombarded by incessant *Hercules*-related propaganda, and indeed many will get much enjoyment from such a title. More mature players, however, are unlikely to remain captivated by it for too long.



Hercules' musical break



Resist the temptation of pressing the joypad's buttons after *Hercules* loads up and the above music video kicks in. It features a variety of scenes from the animation movie and is interlaced with many group shots of Pointer Sisters-like 'singers'. At least the song itself is quite soulful, and not the usual vomit-inducing offerings to come out of Disney's studios.

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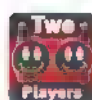
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T3

■ PUBLISHER: Virgin ■ DEVELOPER: Arika/Capcom
 ■ RELEASE DATE: Late October ■ ORIGIN: Japan
 ■ PRICE: £39.99 ■ STYLE: 3D beat 'em up



PlayTest

Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

Familiar faces, but now they're in - ahem - socially acceptable 3D.

Or is it? Get ready to master Cherry Riots, Kill Trumps and the Disastrous Omen Connect Dance in fighting fan's heaven...



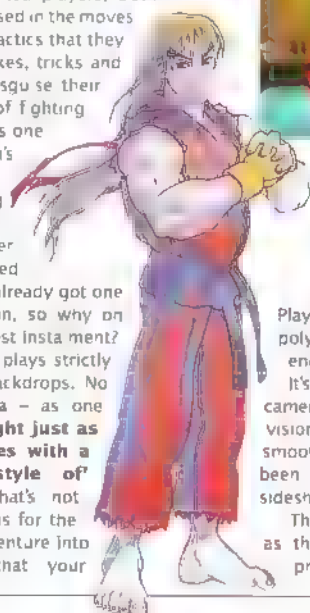
[1] The only time you'll see 3D embraced is in the voyeuristic 'Watch' mode, during [2] a cinematic super combo, or [3] within an action replay. [3] Yes, alright, so we're 'watching' SF's twin thigh-maidens cross boots. [5] Doctrine Dark, a sly *Kombat* reference, invites you to do battle in his sewer. [6] You understand what we mean, now? C'm'ere!



Chess with knuckledusters. That's one way of describing a really good bout of *Street Fighter* between two talented players, both of whom are so versed in the moves and the textbook tactics that they end up using psych outs, fakes, tricks and rash gambles in order to disguise their inevitably predictable style of fighting.

Money for old rope. That's one way of describing Capcom's approach to the surprise one-time hit, constantly churning out remixes and slightly improved sequels year after year. If you're at all interested then the chances are you've already got one such game in your collection, so why on earth should you get this latest instalment?

For all its 3D-ness, *SF EX* plays strictly side-on against flat stage backdrops. No sidesteps, no fighting arena - as one observer noted, they might just as well have drawn sprites with a ruler (*SF* 'in the style of' *Toshinden*). Although that's not quite true, one of the reasons for the marginal sickness of this venture into texture-map territory is that your



[Now, having finished a match you can press a quick continue button and replay, using the same characters and stage.]

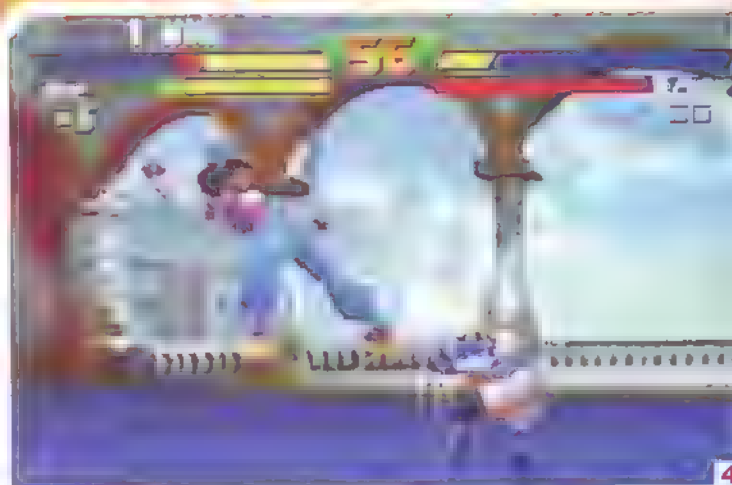
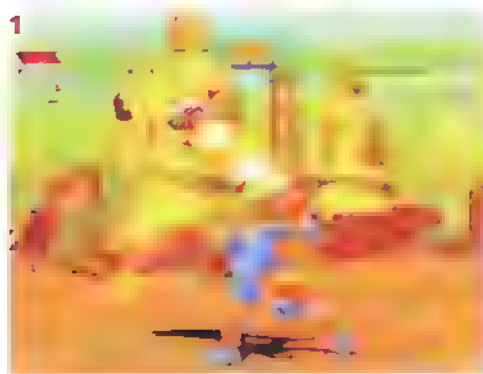
PlayStation is more comfortable animating the modest polygon count required here than it is swapping enormous multi-section sprites with every frame. It's only in the throws and the replays that the camera gets lively enough to offer swooping aerial visions. Unambitious, perhaps, but when you see how smooth it looks and how confusing it could have been if more moves worked like Akuma's irritating sideshift/teleport you'll appreciate the necessity.

That aside, the (each) gameplay is as recognisable as the *Ta, Maha*. Although it draws on all of the previous instalments, the combat engine's



PlayTest

(1) 'Yoga Flame!' (2) From Darun's Super Lariat, it's easier to cancel into his Super Suppressed Fierce God Bomb. That's how we did it. (3) Dhalsim's kinky constrictor throw sees him snaking around the opponent's torso. Couldn't do this with sprites... (4) Pullum Purna has borrowed her moves from Cammy.



► Incredibly reminiscent of *SF2*, and sits somewhere between *Turbo* and *Super*. It's a little bit sloppy in places too – the edges of the screen are still mysterious walls, and it can get very scrappy when two players are constantly crossing under/over each other. Purists might detect a lack of finesse, and it's true that many of the refinements have been lost on this retro engine. Then again, you'll probably bid good riddance to some of the tweaks and twists that justified an *SF* game appearing every year. Air blocking – what was all that about, eh?

And that's why we love it. It's immediately familiar, so you don't feel like you're being left behind, as with the *Alphas*; it's got new tricks, but you can learn in your own time, and seeing Ryu eggbeat Vega's head with his spiny feet from several angles is enough of a novelty to make the whole thing seem fresh again. Sad to admit, but it does feel a little less embarrassing to play the old moves in smart new graphics.

And rejoice! No longer do you have to sit impatiently through Capcom's dshwater-dull 'Now Loading' screens, because they've finally listened to what everybody was telling them. Now, having finished a match, you can

press a quick continue button and replay using the same characters and stage, never accessing the disc at all. Idea, for those running bouts with your favourite World Warriors, and about bloody time.

Although it seems inevitable that you'll be concentrating on Ken or Ryu, the other characters are surprisingly playable. Not much personality, in truth, but interesting enough mechanically to have you spending hours in training mode. Elsewhere it appears that at least one developer has long believed, like this scribe, that Chunners was underpowered and has

Seeing Ryu eggbeat Vega's head

with his spiny feet from several angles

is enough of a novelty to

make the whole thing seem fresh

Go home and be a family man!

Do you recall when a good Guile player was someone to be feared and respected? When everybody wanted to 'be' the bosses, not realising that the computer cheated? When rumours persisted that Vega was Chun Li's dad? When the puffy jacket down the arcade claimed he'd once fought Shen Long, who was supposedly Ryu's secret master? While playing *SFEXA* you can't help noticing a sense of longing for the old days. We spotted several minor homages...



Remember this? Every so often, you'll randomly luzz a fireball in the wrong colour. It was a glitch, originally, but people assumed it had to be something 'special'.

If you push him too far, the CPU flips out in a rage and 'Krazy Ken' will start dragon punching wildly across the screen. Easy meat for the pros, but a scary initiation for beginners.



The finest, most mindless bonus game ever is revisited. Destroy all rolling barrels, only to get knocked down like a flailing fool in a cocky attempt to dragon the very last one.

Sadly, the FMV and sequences are all so dismal that Ryu's 'walking into sunset' finale boasts no more frames of animation than the original. That's, er, two. Now try a harder difficulty.



Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

(1) Jack's special moves almost rival his flares for comedy value. (2) Brutality in SF? You don't want to see what happens next. (3) Repeat QCB+K for the new cyclone. (4) You see? Ugly violence in SF.



Whether you pass through projectiles with a special, or slide under them, there are no characters who get caught by the old fireball trap.

remedied the situation at last. The new hurricane kicks require repeated motions, like Fei Long's rekka, and can be aborted/fluffed prematurely. Ken and Ryu are slightly less invulnerable than usual, and if you ever used jab dragons to skip through fast fireballs then you'll find the tactic is now practically impossible. Conversely, everybody else seems to have their 'windows of temporary invulnerability' stretched to patio door proportions. Whether you pass through projectiles with a special (Zangief, Blair), slide under them (Hokuto, Dhalsim) or simply smack them away with a large stick (Cracker Jack), there are no characters who get hopelessly caught by the old fireball trap.

We can't make comparisons with *Soul Blade* or *Tekken 2*, because it's a different style of scrapping. This is deeper, more tactical and more demanding fare for the hardened fighting fan, and won't be played by groups of mates at the end of a raucous night; rather, you'll need to play against at least one equally competent SF fan, stone cold sober but screaming vengeance. Not the most instant or accessible pursuit, sadly, although the groovesome 3D graphics could attract a few players who rationally reject 2D games as old-fashioned.

So we're left with a bunch of contradictions. It's an entirely 2D game, but in 3D. It's a completely new version of SF that plays like a very old one. It's the most fun we've ever had with Streetfighting since *Turbo*, but you really have to put some effort in. And it's an arcade conversion that works better on a home console. Perhaps that's why our advice is equally askew: if you've already got an SF game in your collection then - up - you really want to trade it in and get this one instead. Um, sorry. And if you've never played an SF game before, forgive those crummy tap-tap auto-combos and find out what a real fighting game is all about. You big girl's blouse. We'll take you a 1 on. And your mates. Come on, then.



(1) Diagonal moves make Kairi a worthy Ryu successor. (2) Slides and deflections let other characters beat the old fireball trap shenanigans. (3) Perhaps turning the tables on hadoken cheapsters. (4) No way. You can make up your own captions at home.

Alternatively...

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|------|
| <i>Tekken 2</i> | 10/10 | PSM1 |
| <i>Street Fighter EX + Alpha</i> | 8/10 | PSM5 |
| <i>Soul Blade</i> | 9/10 | PSM9 |
| <i>Street Fighter Alpha 2</i> | 8/10 | PSM3 |
| <i>Super Smash Bros.</i> | 7/10 | PSM2 |

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| GRAPHICS: | Tidy but unambitious 8 | GAMEPLAY: | Like riding a bike 9 |
| SOUND: | Tragic jazz rock, anyone? 4 | PRESENTATION: | Room for improvement 6 |
| LIFESPAN: | This. Will. Never. Ever. Die 10 | ORIGINALITY: | Street Fighter. Again 7 |

If you loved SF2 - Championship, Turbo and even Super - then this is like a second honeymoon. The true master of explosive martial arts games remains unrivalled.

8

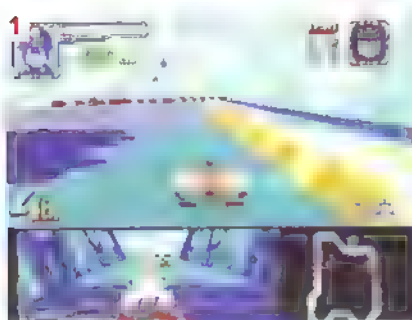


| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|--------------|---------------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Ocean | ■ DEVELOPER: | Tecmo |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ ORIGIN: | Japan |
| ■ PRICE: | £39.99 | ■ STYLE: | Cartoon racing game |

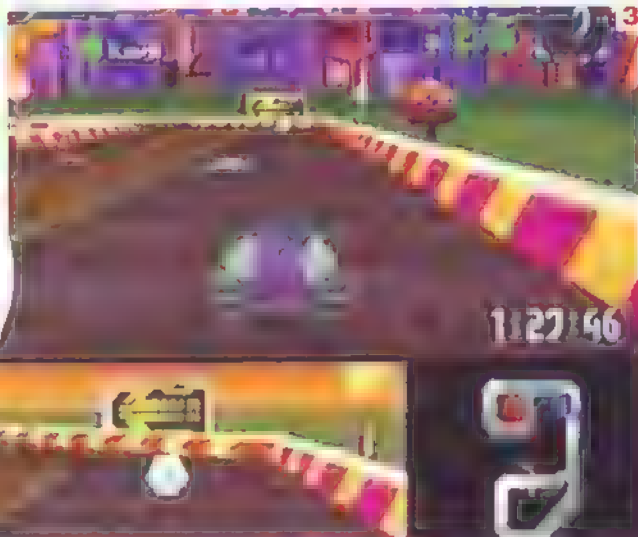
Megaman

Battle And Chase

This familiar-looking 'new' karting game shows how a tried-and-tested formula can be just a little trying...



(1) As you can see, the graphics are not exactly spectacular. (2) The stripy thing is a power-up. It makes a kart go faster, but not the time. (3) There are few thrills on this rather boring circuit.



You may have heard of Megaman before, and that could be because you've noticed that he features in another game - a platformer, which is also reviewed in this issue of PSM. In the platform game he does battle with a number of his arch enemies - like Iceman and Clownman. Here he does battle again with those same super-villains, but this time in a racing game which looks remarkably similar to Mario Kart.

That isn't to say you have to race round the circuits in only goody-goody Megaman's kart - you can also play one of the super-villains, if you prefer. And if you like to speed round the streets getting up people's arses, cutting them up and cackling like a madman, you probably will.



(1) Even a small incline doesn't make one inclined to play for too long. (2) The two-player mode makes things a lot more interesting.

Yes, this kind of game does bring out the worst in people. Once you've deliberately pranged a few opponents, driven a couple more off the road, and hit them with some choice blasts from Iceman's freezer weapon, it doesn't take long before you discover that you're grinning like a madman and involuntary evil chuckles are escaping from your lips.

You may have guessed, by now, that this game is good fun, and it certainly is - but only for a short while. *Megaman Battle And Chase* really is little more than a poor man's *Mario Kart*. After a while the tracks seem short in length, on thrills, and in skill. They don't look very impressive, either. A decent two-player tussle will hide such shortcomings for a few games but, alas, boredom sets in all too quickly and you soon realise that this is not the kind of racer which will have you playing deep into the early hours.

It's a pity, really, because we all like a good punch-up behind a wheel. Sadly, though, *Megaman Battle And Chase* is one of those games for which first impressions turn out to be correct - this is basically just a cheap rip-off.

Alternatively...

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|-------|
| <i>Supersonic Racers</i> | 8/10 | PSM11 |
| <i>Street Racer</i> | 7/10 | PSM13 |
| <i>Megaman Battle & Chase</i> | 3/10 | PSM25 |

VERDICT

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| ■ GRAPHICS | Not state of the kart 3 | ■ GAMEPLAY | Limited 4 |
| ■ SOUND | Typical of the genre 5 | ■ PRESENTATION | Clear 6 |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | Early retirement 3 | ■ ORIGINALITY: | Clearly derivative 0 |

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 25

There's no mistaking the fact that we've seen this game somewhere before and that was done rather better. The fun which is there at the start is not there at the finish.

3
out of 10



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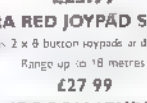
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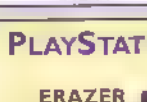
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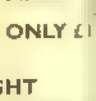
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THIS MONTH IN:

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WICKED ANGELS

Bowen, Brelle and Boring take *Spider-Man*
are still hitting the target 30 years on

SHOCK-OUT MICE AND SAGGY OLD CATS

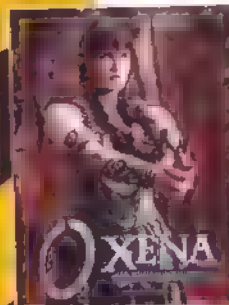
The creative team behind *It's a Wonderful Life*
reveal the origins of their *Spider-Man* feature

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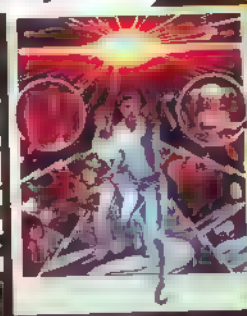


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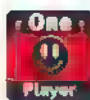
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| ■ PUBLISHER: | SCEE | ■ DEVELOPER: | Kalisto |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | October | ■ ORIGIN: | France |
| ■ PRICE: | £34.99 | ■ STYLE: | Action adventure |



PlayTest



[1] Yes dear, we must. It sounds absolutely delightful. [2] Doof! If you can pin one of these fellows against a wall, hammering the button is often enough to conclude the 'business'. [3] Patently, something is going to leap out from the boxes. It's getting a torch in the schnozz, whatever it is. [4] Do these guys know how to party or what?

Nightmare Creatures

Something evil taints the byways of Old Clapham, but this time you can't blame the hackney carriage. It's a right pea-souper, and no mistake



[1] Unless killed outright by your special move, zombies are most reluctant to die. [2] Simple combos of slashes and kicks are easy to find. [3] The ship in docks - one of the more evocative locations.

London, 1834. As night falls, the city stands on the brink of destruction by monstrous forces. Vile homunculi and re-animated corpses have been summoned and unleashed by the sorcerous Mr Crowley. Um, no, that's Adam Crowley (no relation). Nevertheless, he is a nasty man and must be THWARTED. Take a guess at your role in the unfolding drama...

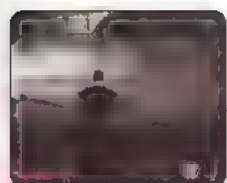
At its heart, *Creatures* draws together recognisable elements from several other successful PlayStation titles and luzzes them into a witch's cauldron. Gaze upon its texture-mapped 3D environments, whose cobblestones and gaslights evoke a classically dark fantasy of London in the 19th century. Quaver at the approach of its polygon-based demons, a veritable bestiary of long-clawed, ichor-dripping refugees from *Resident Evil*. And cheer as you control either hero or heroine, decapitating the undead with a

cut-throat and unloading a duelling pistol into a werewolf's jaws before leaping Lara style across a broken bridge.

Familiar stuff indeed. But to its credit, *Nightmare Creatures* has a flavour all of its own. The Gothic cemeteries, shady backstreets, and dank sewers - all with just a hint of Lovecraftian nastiness - provide a sense of location that's beautifully realised.

It's a calamitous tragedy, therefore, that *Creatures* should fail to deliver a worthwhile gaming experience after showing so much promise. There's no single ►

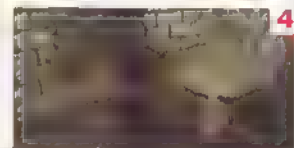
It's the combination of poor controls, inefficient camera views and a sloppy combat system that works to undermine your pleasure.



Playtest



(1) '...And when I woke up, doctor, my arms were stuck like this.' (2) There is no clean, tidy way to dispose of the undead. (3) Two boiled eggs in clingfilm, etc. (4) Aha! A secret bit, cunningly found by, um, slapping a wall. (5) Another PR disaster for Yorkshire Water. (6) So that's what the long, red candle with a fizzy wick does. (7) Shades of Turok! A hulk leaps through the wall.



► sticking point, no one fault that lets it down. Rather, it's the combination of poor controls, inefficient camera views and a sloppy combat system that works to undermine your pleasure from the first level to the last. Map design is simplistic, a matter of finding switches and backtracking to locate the opened gate, and it's all very much on ground level – you won't discover any tiered ziggurats or balconies overlooking huge caverns in the *Tomb Raider* fashion. This would appear to be deliberate, so that the emphasis is placed on the physical conflict that lies at the core of the game.

tactic was to pin your monster against

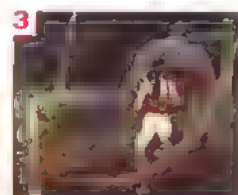
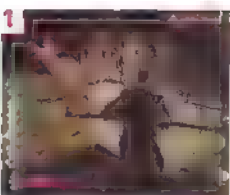
hammering buttons.

Despite early comparisons to beat 'em ups, however, the combat system is woefully primitive. We tried using the block, we worked out the simple combos, and just when we thought we were getting the hang of it, some great oaf of a creature would come along and trash us in a seemingly random exchange of blows. You simply cannot see the hits coming. Why don't the monsters have recognisable attack patterns that you could watch

and learn, and anticipate? Why, instead, do they suddenly lunge at you from metres away in an unpredictable fashion? Combined with the viewpoint problems (you're always advancing toward an enemy that is half-obscured by your own character), any element of skill is completely ruled out. Nor can you gauge the distance as clearly as you'd like from this perspective, as anyone who has played *Tekken 2* in wireframe mode will know.

Breaking open crates and discovering hidden treasures is thus the best means of survival, as it produces gun ammo, collectible one-shot projectiles and magic artifacts that can hinder or destroy at a safe distance. Otherwise, you're left to fight it out with your hand weapon.

Disappointingly, we found the best tactic was to pin your monster against a handy wall and keep hammering buttons until it fell over. Your own attacks always involve a leap forward, so long fights can send you blundering into dangerous, unexplored areas. This is pure folly in an environment where you can lose an entire life by slipping from a platform into the murky depths, and caused us much unnecessary anguish.



(1) 'Begone, devilspawn, for I have a big stick.' (2) Nope, too many arms. Kill it. (3) It takes a few seconds for slayed hulks to appreciate the fact.



Nightmare Creatures

Life In The Smoke

Forget your Camden Market and your Oxford Street, your tacky souvenirs and sardine-tight tube trains. *Nightmare Creatures* depicts that fictitious London where you can find empty streets, deserted

courtyards, thick fog descending over the alleys in which you imagine outwardly respectable men in tall hats making hypocritical propositions to large-bosomed ladies... But have things really changed that much?



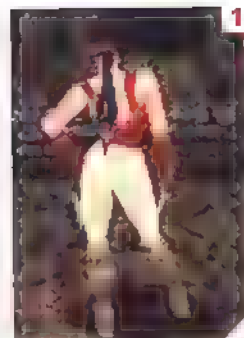
[1] Excited tourists gather for the Changing Of The Heads. [2] The Victorian subway system runs as smoothly as it did when the map of the world was mostly pink. [3] Clubbers will find London bouncers are polite and amenable, with a friendly door policy. [4] Conclude your visit with a trip to Kew.

In all other areas, the protagonists lack sophistication. No swimming, no grabbing ledges, no crawling or climbing. The long jump seems to carry for a good 15 yards, but five-foot garden walls prove impenetrable. There are no camera controls - in several instances, using the sidestep to enter a corridor with *Doom*-style tactics merely resulted in a lovely side-on close-up of Nadia in a corridor, looking at something we couldn't actually see. Which kind of negates the whole point of a sidestep in the first place, you know?

Then there's the peculiar timer which, in an effort to keep you moving, starts to drain your health if you haven't killed any monsters recently. Not only is this feature most unwelcome for those who like to go searching for secrets in secured areas, it also deflates any potent atmosphere of terror the game

might have retained. As you run headlong into the unexplored regions of the map, the knowledge of certain death if you *don't* bump into something horrible very soon completely negates any fear of the unknown dangers waiting ahead.

Occasionally, when allowed to run around causing havoc, you get a glimpse of what could have been a half-decent zombie scrap. More than occasionally, though, you'll be cursing your failure in situations that seem beyond your control. It's just enough to make you persevere for an evening or two, but *Nightmare Creatures* is fatally marred by shallow design and bad execution. Who knows, with another few months in development, some brutally honest playtesting and several extra levels created, it could have been a tremendous game. And not as is the case, a mediocre 3D take on the scrolling hack 'em up.



[1] An audience of sexually frustrated males? Tish and pish. [2] In tight situations, use your pistol to 'pop his cap'. [3] You'll find the trick to this boss after dying like a buffoon, nine times over.

VERDICT

■ **GRAPHICS:** Moody and evocative **8** ■ **GAMEPLAY:** Scuppered by the controls **6**
 ■ **SOUND:** Inappropriate low-quality metal **4** ■ **PRESENTATION:** Superbly average **5**
 ■ **LIFESPAN:** Short, albeit tough **5** ■ **ORIGINALITY:** A hotch-potch of styles **6**

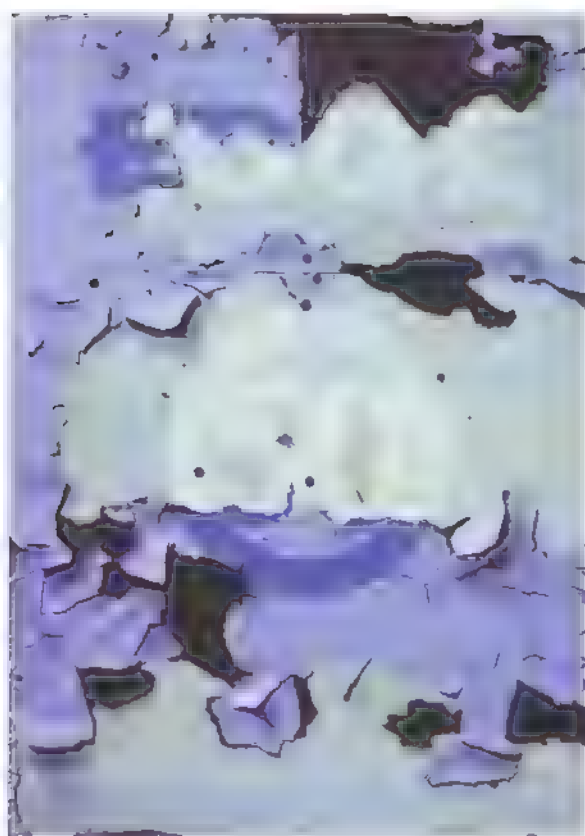
What should have been a pleasant romp falls at the first hurdle, with unresponsive controls, obstinate camera-work and an unfair combat system. Oh, Mr Crowley.

5
out of 10

Official UK
PlayStation
 Magazine 25

Alternatively...

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|------|
| <i>Resident Evil</i> | 8/10 | PS98 |
| <i>The Hard Trilogy</i> | 8/10 | PS98 |
| <i>Kings Field</i> | 8/10 | PS98 |
| <i>Time Commando</i> | 8/10 | PS98 |
| <i>Nightmare Creatures</i> | 5/10 | PS98 |



PUBLISHER: Ocean DEVELOPER: Capcom
 RELEASE DATE: October ORIGIN: Japan
 PRICE: £39.99 STYLE: Platform game



PlayTest!



(1) Enter the world of the Clownman and his lethal toys. (2) Ski your way out of trouble. (3) Errrrr... (4) Aaah... this looks like one of those lift-transporter-type things. Going up? (5) Now, these are some of the Clownman's deadly tin soldiers - and they're persistent buggers!

Megaman 8

While games like *Crash* continue to take the platform genre to new heights, does the PlayStation really need such regressive fare as this?

The law of natural selection has ensured that the platform game has evolved. No longer are they the mundane, two dimensional, tortuous puzzles they used to be. In fact, so different and bizarre have they become that even those of us who previously considered the whole idea to be an odd waste of time have been forced to re-examine our prejudices. For suddenly they no longer even look like platform games. They can even be quite addictive.

It's almost comforting to know, however, that there are still some platformers which don't move with the times and remain one can only assume deliberately, resolutely old fashioned, and *Megaman 8* certainly is, in look and feel, a blast from the past.

In the game you play (not surprisingly) Megaman, a not altogether unbreakable, pint sized superhero who must battle to rid the world of some extremely nasty super-villains. The baddies have changed the world into strange

parodies of themselves. Ceman, for instance, has created a kingdom of ice and snow protected by deadly penguins, and Clownman has conjured up a kingdom where deadly toys follow his bidding. As Megaman, you must jump and shoot your way through these and other hazards, collecting stuff on the way, destroying the villains, and saving the world, etc.

It's just another platform game, in other words, and one which unfortunately doesn't do enough to justify exhuming an odd corpse which is fast becoming a bit wiffy. Amiable but not visually impressive, or the least bit innovative in terms of what you can do with your character, it's highly doubtful that the PlayStation really needs it. Playing it is a bit like discovering a box of worthless old comics that you'd forgotten existed, amusing to flip through, for a while, but hardly worth wasting a week over.



Alternatively...

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|------|
| Crash Bandicoot | 8/10 | PSM1 |
| Cheesy | 7/10 | PSM2 |
| Mickey's Wild Adventure | 7/10 | PSM1 |
| Rayman | 7/10 | PSM1 |
| Earthworm Jim 2 | 8/10 | PSM1 |
| Megaman 8 | 3/10 | PSM2 |

VERDICT

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| GRAPHICS: | Cheerfully unambitious 3 | GAMEPLAY: | Tirelessly tiresome 3 |
| SOUND: | Chirpy 4 | PRESENTATION: | Reasonably easy 5 |
| LIFESPAN: | An extremely rainy day 3 | ORIGINALITY: | No more! Please! 3 |

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A cheery little platformer which is more of a trip down memory lane than a game for the state-of-the-art PlayStation. It isn't fun enough to warrant buying, though.

3
 out of 10

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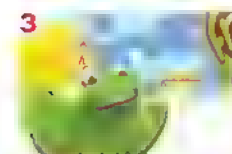
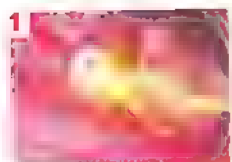
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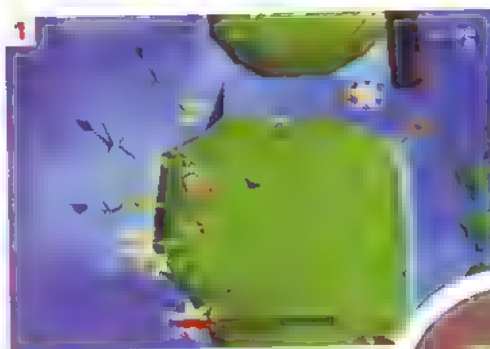
PlayStation!

Frogger

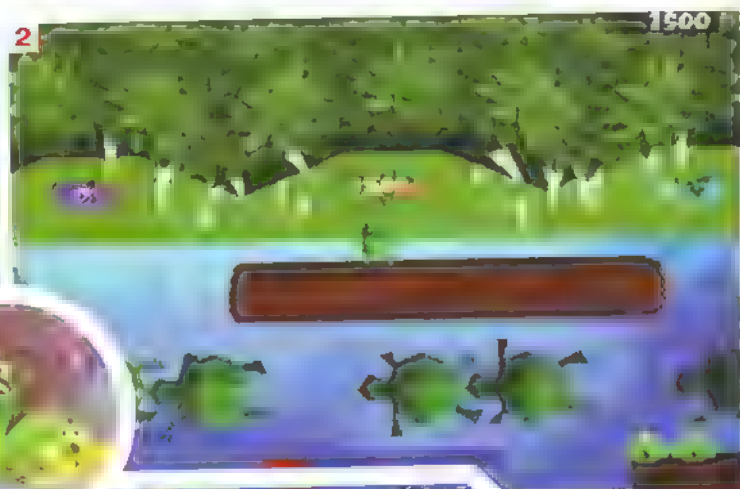
Though it enjoyed some **cult status** when it first appeared some 15 years ago, **Frogger** was never all that good – there just isn't enough to do when you're a frog. Fancy new graphics ultimately don't disguise that problem



[1, 2] The opening sequence reminds you just how far gaming graphics have come in the last 15 years. **[3]** He doesn't look quite this good in-game.



When it first appeared in arcade format in the early '80s, *Frogger* enjoyed a brief summer of popularity for its inherent silliness. It rightly became a cult classic, nostalgically remembered and rather special in its own slightly ridiculous way and in its own time. But like many fond memories, *Frogger* would have been best left where it was – in a happy corner of the minds of older gamers. While this new '90s version has been expanded and updated, most notably with the addition of a two-player mode, in many ways the gameplay is inferior to its predecessor. Your task in the original *Frogger* was to help the little croaker across a busy five-lane road without getting him splatted. If you succeeded in that, there were water obstacles to be negotiated by means of jumping between floating logs. But even if your hapless little amphibian did meet his inevitable fate, you could at least laugh at the thought of a poor little frog being squashed all



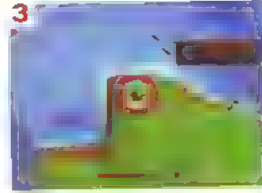
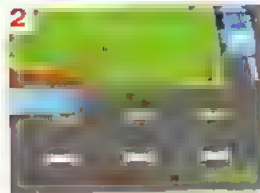
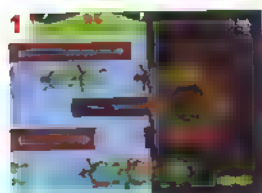
[1] You have what the designers call a 'heat-seeking tongue' – stand near a fly, stick your tongue out and it will automatically go in the right direction. **[2]** The retro levels will jog a few memories, though they're perhaps a little too easy. **[3]** Jump, croak and eat. That's just about all there is to a frog's life...

Why couldn't the frog jump in the

water? If the protagonist had been a

hedgehog, we could've

understood his aquaphobia!



[1] Going off-screen kills you. **[2]** 40 levels in nine distinct areas add to the value-for-money. **[3]** Don't worry, there'll be another along soon. Logs are like buses.

over the road. You wouldn't laugh at that now, of course, but a child's sense of humour is much more cruel.

Like so many early computer games, *Frogger* was always entirely meaningless and basically quite stupid. Why couldn't the frog jump in the water? If the protagonist had been a hedgehog, we could've understood his aquaphobia. A toad, even, might've been inclined to stay on land. But frogs are naturally amphibious creatures and actually like nothing more than a good swim.

Nevertheless, the original game was fun, and there was some simple puzzle solving as you tried to work out the least dangerous route to safety.

This new PlayStation version of *Frogger* starts with the retro levels of road and river, but as you progress through the 40 levels on offer you find your little frog in a wide variety of new and different looking situations.



PUBLISHER: Hasbro Interactive DEVELOPER:

RELEASE DATE: November ORIGIN:

PRICE: £39.99 STYLE:

Platform game

The more frogs, the better...



The race mode gives you a split-screen and some seriously difficult courses. You can confuse your opponent by jumping on their back in the midst of dense traffic, before leaping to safety at the last second. This almost invariably leaves your adversary dazzled by the lights of the oncoming truck and gets them run over. However, the division of the screen in this mode only increases the field-of-view problems, and while racing your friends is the most fun you'll have from this game, it's all very hectic and flummoxing and there are better multi-player games on the market.

an often frustrating test of memory. To make

has also been made harder

Unfortunately, despite the graphics, the gameplay doesn't vary very much at all. There are some new elements, like the croak, the super-hop and the fly catching tongue – just get close to an unsuspecting insect, hit the button, and your long tongue flicks out and grabs you a little snack – but even these fail to add enough variety.

In addition, your field of vision is actually smaller than the original. The level set in a dark dungeon takes this to an extreme, as only the squares immediately surrounding you can be seen. So instead of puzzle-solving, you get an often frustrating test of memory. To make matters worse, the game has also been made harder. Some of the obstacles are very difficult to avoid and require perfect timing. It's satisfying when you get

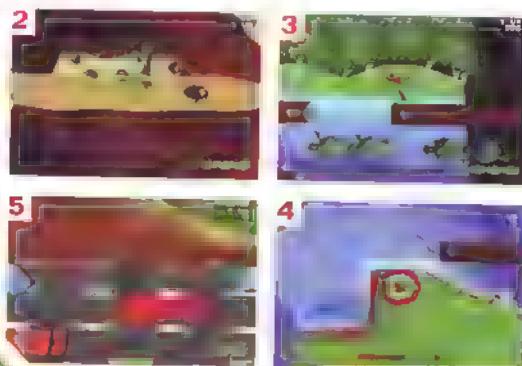


(1) It was the car this time, but trying to cross the river on the backs of those blue turtles would have killed you too – they have a nasty tendency to disappear underfoot. (2) In one-player mode, it quickly gets stale, even with the wide range of new levels and domains.



it right, but frustrating when you don't, much like those annoying pixel-perfect platform games. And you still die if you fall in the water.

What will make this game sell, however, is the multi-player race mode. Frog racing will always be a lot of fun, and this is where the PlayStation version of this old favourite becomes addictive. In single-player mode, though, you'll either have to be desperate to know what the golden frogs do, or be something of a nostalgic to be playing *Frogger* for long.



(1) Our hero, the common green computerised frog. Handsome chap, isn't he? (2-5) You have to admire the effort that's gone into updating *Frogger* to the PlayStation, even though the innate limitations of the game let things down too much.

Alternatively...

| | | |
|----------------------|------|-----|
| <i>Jumping Flash</i> | 8/10 | PSM |
| <i>Rayman</i> | 7/10 | PSM |
| <i>Croc</i> | 7/10 | PSM |
| <i>Frogger</i> | 5/10 | PSV |

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:

SOUND

LIFESPAN

Retro 5 GAMEPLAY:

Ribbit 4 PRESENTATION:

ORIGINALITY:

Repetitive 4

Same old tat 5

No 1

Trying to squeeze some extra mileage out of cheesy old games is not the way forward for videogames. Put a straw in its mouth and blow.

5

out of 10

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 25

In two-player mode 7



| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|
| ■ PUBLISHER: | Interplay | ■ DEVELOPER: | Beam |
| ■ RELEASE DATE: | Out now | ■ ORIGIN: | UK |
| ■ PRICE: | £44.99 | ■ STYLE: | Platform puzzler |

Devil's Deception

A kingdom to save, a mysterious castle, a pact with the devil...

The perfect setting for a gripping adventure? Or are we being deceived?

(1) This bloke pops up occasionally. He has spells and herbs to sell, which you'll need during your quest. (2) This bloke is not so helpful. He's one of your rivals. You must defeat him to take over the castle. (3) It wasn't me!



You are the heir to the throne of an unlikely kingdom and your younger brother has framed you for the murder of your father, the king. Cursing your luck and praying for some mystical intervention on your behalf before you face execution, you are suddenly transported to a mysterious castle. There you learn that you may regain your princess and your kingdom if you make a pact with the devil. But to be able to make this pact, you must first become master of the castle by capturing and sacrificing the souls of its many denizens – some of whom also seek to control the castle.

Intrigued? After the mildly amusing hokum of the introductory movie sequence, you are free to explore the castle and unlock its secrets by setting off traps which open new areas for you to explore. Once you have cased the joint, as it were, the game – essentially one of strategy – begins in earnest. Using your map and various spells, you

must set traps to ensnare the castle's population. There are six possible outcomes, depending on what choices you make during the game. Get it right and you save the day, your princess and your kingdom. Still intrigued?

Unfortunately, *Devil's Deception* sounds much more fun on paper than it really is, for few but the real anoraks among us are likely to get much fun out of it. In practice, it consists of wandering around corridors, wondering what the hell is going on, and then, having realised exactly what you have to do, deciding that the whole affair is rather dull, not to say exasperating. In short, there's far too much map-reading and scrolling through spells, and too little action. It's all a bit heavy on the eyes, too garish, blocky and wobbly, the graphics are almost as much of a strain as the game itself.

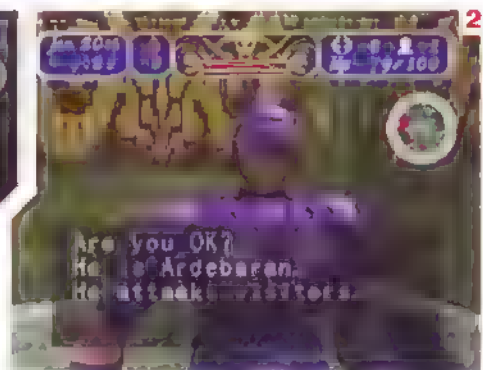
To be sure, if you really did happen to be locked away in some dungeon, with a choice of either staring at the damp walls or playing *Devil's Deception*, you might well find that you get into the game; but in the comfort of your own living room, with a number of alternative activities to divert you, you would have to conclude that staring at a blank wall would be only marginally more tedious. A shame, really, given how much work must have gone into this large and complex title.

Alternatively...

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------|
| <i>Redworld</i> | 0/10 | PSM24 |
| <i>Pandemonium</i> | 0/10 | PSM14 |
| <i>Devil's Deception</i> | 3/10 | PSM25 |



(1) Take that! (One of the many spells you have at your disposal to attack other characters in the castle.) (2) Not all of the natives are unfriendly, though.



VERDICT

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | Painful 3 | ■ GAMEPLAY: | Purgatory 3 |
| ■ SOUND: | Not very 4 | ■ PRESENTATION: | Average 5 |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | Minutes rather than hours 2 | ■ ORIGINALITY: | Original as sin 3 |

This game seems like a good idea, to start with. Then you discover a world which bears little resemblance to our idea of Hell, but is certainly hell to play in.

3
out of 10



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This month: Poser

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Issue 11

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TOP SECRET

This month the final part of our player's guide to **Vandal-Hearts**, plus tips for **Andrexxi Racing**, **FIFA Soccer '96**, and **Independence Day** among others.

VANDAL-HEARTS



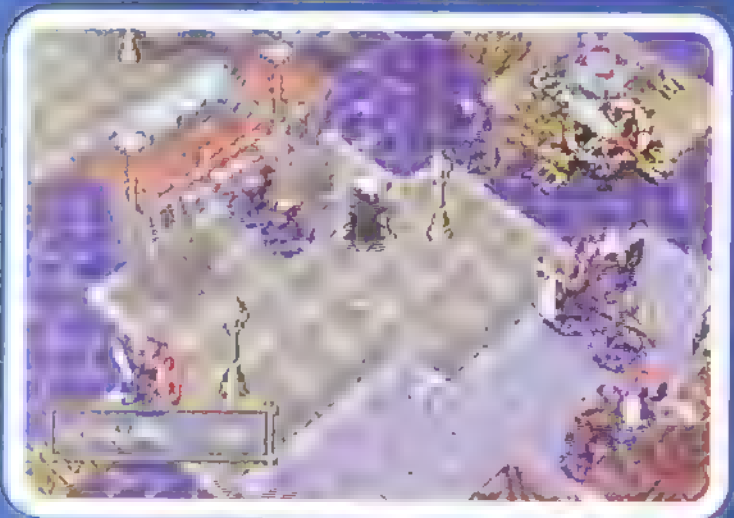
Prison Fortress

For this second battle of the Prison Fortress, you must keep Clint and Ash alive. After your first move, the rest of your party will appear in the south-west corner. Move the group in the centre towards them as you'll need to use their magic to restore lost health. Use Phase Shift and Roman Fire spells as you make your way around the battlement to Dumas.

Items: There's a bag of gold to the south. It's below the tile that resembles a snail shell, and a Mana Key in the star-shaped crater to the west.

ACT 4: THE SUCCESSOR

Khanos City



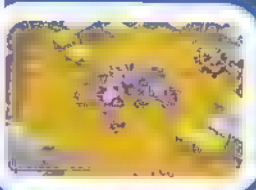
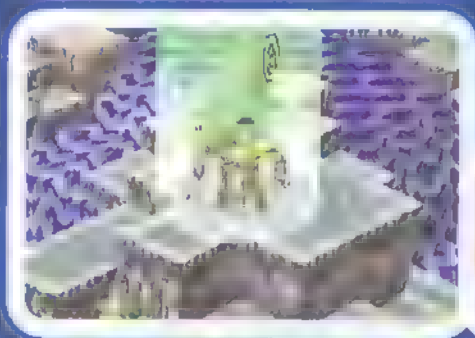
To win this battle you must simply get out of the town as soon as possible before Ash gets killed. Send one of your party members over to the switch that'll lower the drawbridge, then guide your party across the bridge and through the gate.

Items: There's a Gold axe to be collected from the tile that has three small craters on it, a bottle of Holy Water in the chest to the east, and an Aura gem in the remaining chest.

Great Masai Forest

Use your guards to block off one of the bridges, then guide the rest of your party across the opposite bridge. Keep your party close together as you'll need to use healing magic to restore damaged health. Watch out for the Kugaboo's—they have a long-range attack.

Items: There's an Aura gem below the snail-shaped tile and a Kingfoil in the star-shaped tile in the north-east.



Trade City Kefacha

While in the town, use the shop to stock up on supplies, then head into the tavern and talk to everyone inside. Remember to save your game before moving on to Carlo's Mansion.

Carlo's Mansion

After finding out that Diego is the son of Carlos, you must head to the old town warehouse to make the exchange for the ring.

Old Town Warehouse

Keep your party in the centre of the warehouse for



begin with, use Shift Phase to destroy the Gold Golems and Healing Circle to restore damage sustained. Finally, target the Eggworms positioned on the higher platforms.

Magic Train Station

Once the battle has begun, continually move your carriage every two moves, so you'll have to watch your step.

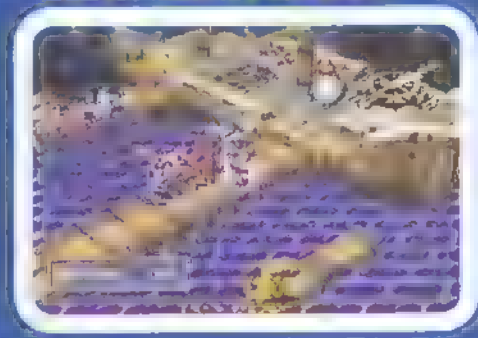
Items: There's a Ramen located below the tile that looks like a grate, near Dallas' initial position. The Ramen is the third piece of the collector's treasure. Give all three pieces to the man in the tavern in Trade City Kerach and he'll give you the Chaos key.

Fort Dain

To win this battle you must destroy all eight death devices within eight turns. Send Diego and Kira around to deal with the devices around the other side while using Shift Phase to destroy the nearest ones.

Items: The two chests contain a Life Orb and a leather mask. There's also block of Mithril below the tile that resembles a snail's shell.

ACT 5: THE LEGACY



Wart Bay

Split your party into two groups and move them along the jetties. Use Shift Phase spells to damage as many Golems as possible in one hit. You'll also need to cure spells, should any of your members become poisoned.

Items: The chests contain plate armour.

Pioneer Town Sorbo

While in the town, use the Dojo to advance any members of your party then head into the shop and spent some gold on weapons, armour, and items.

Torog Mountains

Keep your party off the bridge until you've taken care of the Crimson Hawks then advance on the remaining enemies. Use Roman Fire and long-range attacks to deal with them. The switch will blow the bridge up when examined. On defeating Kurtz and winning the battle, you'll receive a pair of Panzar Claws.

Items: Both the items here are found under tiles that have small paw prints on them. There's a Helstone and a block of Mithril to collect.

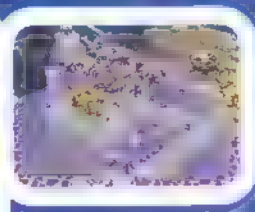
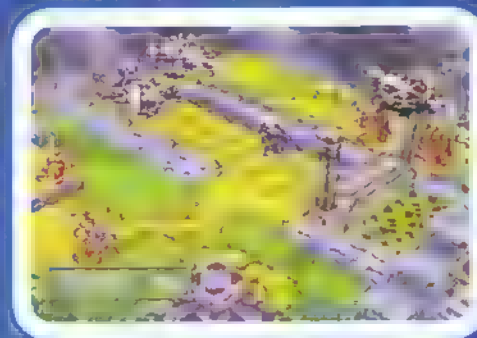
Tsukue Plains

Use Shift Phase and Roman Fire to destroy the Golems, arrows to remove the Death Angels, and swords to defeat all remaining enemies.

Smoking Bones Cave

Use magic against the Golems as standard and long-distance attacks on the poisonous creatures. Don't worry too much about the dragon - he doesn't have the ability to cast magic and can only attack at close range. After winning the battle, you'll receive a Wyrmfang.

Items: The Logos key can be found in the lava pool, while the chest contains a Dragon Spear.



Frontier Village

Move your party across the riverbed, then wait for the Crimson guards behind you to follow before examining the switch and washing them away. Once across the river, Kane will appear and cause more trouble. Keep your healers handy for the entire battle. You'll receive a Rune bow at the end of the battle.

Items: The two cracked paving tiles contain a block of Mithril and a Shivbook.

Drome Lake

For this battle you must clear a path for Leena to reach the switches in order for her to raise the bridges. Keep your healers to the back of the group and your guardsmen to the front. You must allow Leena access to the temple entrance in order to win the battle.

Items: There's a Gold axe in the chest to the north.

while the other one contains a Wyrmling.

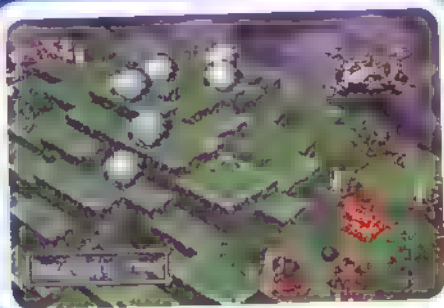
Glasgow City

Here you'll find the shop with the best armour
and five prisms from the previous act, you can
man in the tavern.

Fort Garveth

destroying everything in your path. Restore your ability to cast Plasma Wave, but only once. Use it wisely.

Health: After defeating Kane, you'll receive his sword, Caliburn.



Coastal Beach

This battle is pretty straightforward. Keep your

Items: The three chests contain a Life Orb, some powerful battle axe.

Capital Shumeria

then attack him with everything you have



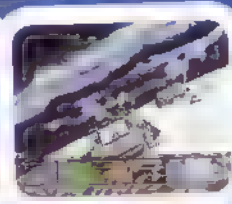
PASSWORDS

access the various stages

0007 Stage 2 Clear (Gas Mask Blues and Closing)

25

n224 stage 4 clear (Trident Strike available)

0224 stage 4 clear (Trident Strike available,
0225 stage 4 clear (Area F1 available)

Start a new race, then select **Begin Career** option.
Now enter the following codes on the Registration

Go Bearly For Stock Cars

Go Bruins! For Formula One Cars

Car Editor

R2, X, O and Select. This will allow access to a secret 'Car Edit' menu that'll enable you to adjust vehicle settings.

Various cheats

achieve the listed effects:

TRIANGLE UP TRIANGLE TRIANGLE TRIANGLE
 RIGHT CIRCLE DOWN X TRIANGLE TRIANGLE
 TRIANGLE SQUARE

Invincibility

TRIANGLE TRIANGLE TRIANGLE RIGHT CIRCLE
DOWN X X X X TRIANGLE SQUARE

SQUARE, SQUARE, UP, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE,
TRIANGLE, RIGHT, CIRCLE, DOWN, X, TRIANGLE,
TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE

Maximum weapons LEFT SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, UP TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE,

01, 01, 01, 01, 02, 02, 02, 02, 02, 02, 02, 02
B airstrike LEFT SQUARE SQUARE SQUARE

CIRCLE DOWN: X, X, X, X, X, X

[illegible]

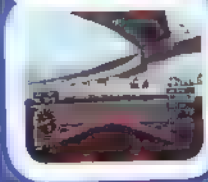
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Figure 6

TRIANGLE TRIANGLE
 GARDEN - TRANSPARENCY LEFT SQUARE

OVERSEAS MAP TRANSLATIONS

...and the





AREA 51

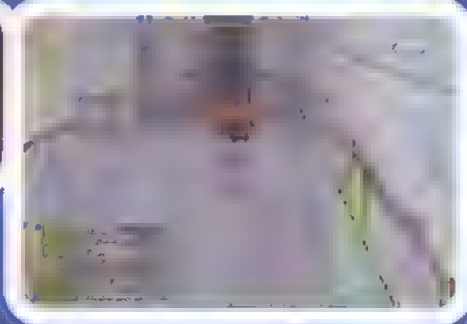
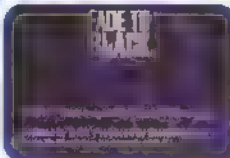
Control Boss

Play the first level of the game, shoot nothing but the first three STAA members. The game should now restart and you will be controlling the alien boss.

Shotgun Cheat

During play, pause the game and press: TRIANGLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, LEFT and R1 to start with a shotgun.

FADE TO BLACK



Cheats

Use these passwords to access the following cheats. Note: You must enter the Cheat Activation Codes before entering the codes. Ignore all Invalid Code messages when using them.

SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE.

Once entered, leave the password screen and re-enter it immediately. Now you can enter any of the following:

Play all movies

SQUARE, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X.

Infinite Shield code

SQUARE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X.

Invincibility code

TRIANGLE, X, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE.

Level Select

CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, SQUARE.

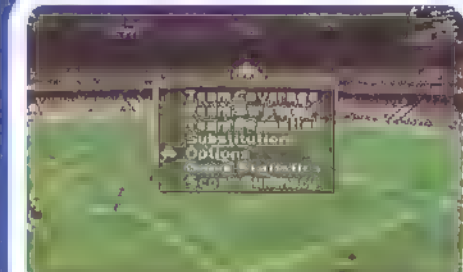
FIFA SOCCER '96

Lighting effects

At the Instant Replay screen, hold down R1 and use the directional buttons to adjust the lighting effects. Pressing RIGHT and LEFT, while R1 is held down, will alter the angle of shadow. UP and DOWN will alter the length of shadow.

Secret options

Start a game and pause it, then select Options and enter one of the following button sequences. Now exit the Options menu and resume the game, then press SQUARE to get the Secret Options menu.



Invisible walls X, X, X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE.

Curve ball TRIANGLE, SQUARE, X, TRIANGLE, X, X, Crazy ball X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, X.

Super power TRIANGLE, S, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE.

Super goals SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE.

Super offence SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X.

Super defence TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, TRIANGLE.

Shootout SQUARE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE.

Stupid team SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X.

Dream team SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, X, SQUARE, SQUARE.

Uniform choices

Use the same method as before to enter the following codes but instead of resuming the game, quit the current game, then select Options from the main menu to access the new uniform choices.

Formal SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, TRIANGLE.

Federation SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, X.

Dynamic duo SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE.

Default colour palette SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X.

Invisible SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE.

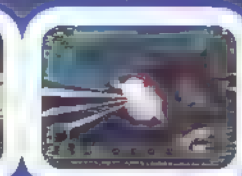
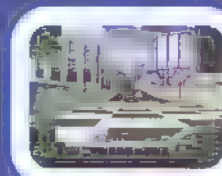
Oktoberfest SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE.

EA custom team SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, SQUARE.

IMPACT RACING

Invincibility

For invincibility, go to the password screen and enter the following code: I.A.M.IMORTAL. Now when you start the game, you'll be invincible.



Cheats

INDEPENDENCE DAY



Plane Select

On the Options screen, enter the player name as **MR. HAPPY**. Now enter the game Selection screen and quickly press: **LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, DOWN**. This will allow you to choose a specific plane from the Options screen.

Invincibility option

On the Options screen, enter the player name as **LIVE FREE**. Now enter the game Selection screen and quickly press: **LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, DOWN**. This will allow you to select invincibility from the Options screen.

City Select

On the Options screen, enter the player name as **FOX ROX**. Now enter the Game Selection screen and quickly press: **LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, DOWN**. This will allow you to choose a specific city from the Options screen.

Fast Reload, Damage

On the Options screen, enter the player name as **GO POSTAL**. Now enter the Game Selection screen and quickly press: **LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, DOWN**. This will make a fast reload, damage bonus, and weapons options menu appear.

Kill Civilians & Wingman options

On the Options screen, enter the player name as **GODZILLA**. Now enter the game Selection screen and quickly press: **LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, DOWN**. This will make a cheat menu appear with kill civ and kill wingman options.

Extra Options

On the Options screen, enter the player name as **TOURIST**. Now enter the game Selection screen and quickly press: **LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, DOWN**. This will make a cheat menu appear with city, tourist, demo cam, and

no time options.

Cheat mode

On the Options screen, enter the player name as **DAB DAB**. Now enter the game Selection screen and quickly press: **LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, DOWN**. This will make all cheat options available.

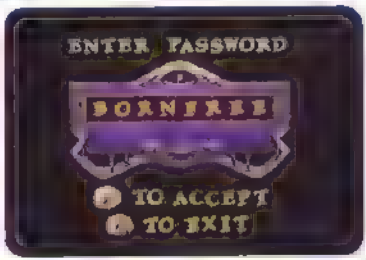
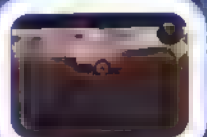
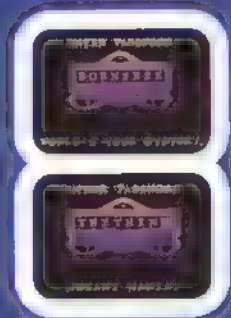
PANDEMONIUM

Level passwords

- Level 01: ADEAMII
- Level 02: EPUAKCA
- Level 03: EPUAKCA
- Level 04: KOCCEIE
- Level 05: KOCCEIE
- Level 06: KOCCEIE
- Level 07: KOCCEIE
- Level 08: KOCCEIE
- Level 09: KOCCEIE
- Level 10: KOCCEIE
- Level 11: KOCCEIE
- Level 12: KOCCEIE
- Level 13: KOCCEIE
- Level 14: KOCCEIE
- Level 15: KOCCEIE
- Level 16: KOCCEIE
- Level 17: KOCCEIE
- Level 18: KOCCEIE

Cheat passwords

- BORNFREE**: Level select
- HARDBODY**: invincibility
- VITAMINS**: Extra (31) lives
- CORONARY**: Extra hearts
- BODYSWAP**: Swap between characters in-game by pressing L1
- OTTOFIRE**: Permanent special weapons
- EVILDEAD**: Immortal enemies
- THETHING**: Mutate your body using L2. Press L2 and X to reset.
- NANDOUT**: Quitting returns player to map screen.
- TWISTEYE**: Hold L1 and L2, then use D-pad to rotate screen.
- CASHDASH**: Special greed bonus game when you complete a level.
- TOMMYBOY**: Pinball bonus game when you complete a level.



If you have any queries about games and their release dates, these are the people to contact...

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Moreau House, 112-120 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge,
London SW3 1J

0171 344 5000

Activision

Gemini House, 133 High Street, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB11
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01895 456700

BMG Interactive

Bedford House, 69-79 Fulham High Street, London, SW6 3JW

0171 973 0011

Bullfrog

20 Nugent Rd, Surrey Research Park, Guildford, GU2 5AF

01483 579399

Codemasters

Lower Farm House, Stoneythorpe, Southam, Warwickshire,
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01926 814132

Core Design

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01332 297797

Eidos

2nd Floor, Wimbledon Bridge House, 1 Hartfield, Wimbledon,
SW19 3RJ

0181-636 3000

Electronic Arts

90 Heron Drive, Langley, Berkshire, SL3 8XP

01753 549442

Fire International Ltd

Nacap House, 46-48 Silver Street, Doncaster, DN1 1HT

01302 325225

Gremlin

Carver House, 2-4 Carver Street, Sheffield, S1 4FS

0114 275 3423

GT Interactive

The Old Grammar School, 248 Marylebone Road, London, NW1
6JT

0171 258 3791

Interplay

Harleyford Manor, Harleyford, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 2DX

01628 423666



JVC

4th Floor, 17-18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London,
WC2E 8QH

0171 240 3121

Konami

Konami House, 54a Cowley Mill Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex,
UB8 2QE

01895 853000

Mindscape

Priority House, Charles Avenue, Maltins Park, Burgess Hill,
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Namco

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0171 734 7737

Ocean

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0161 832 6633

Psygnosis

Napier Court, Stephenson Way, Wavertree Technology Park,
Liverpool, L13 1HD

0151 282 3000

SCEE

Waverley House, 7-12 Noel Street, London, W1V 4HH

0171 447 1600

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01924 267776

Telstar

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No matter how hard you try,

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The Rappa is very hard to describe

with words alone. So, being

considerate chaps, we decided

to let you experience the game for

yourself with this month's

exclusive demo. Then we filled

the rest of the CD with another

bunch of excellent demos. Are we

good to you, or what?

PaRappa The Rapper

PUBLISHER: Sony
STYLE: Simon Says
PROGRAM: Playable demo

Now you'll have probably read a hell of a lot about this little fella. You may even have put our special cutout-and-keep characters up on your mantelpiece. But nothing quite beats the first time you play *PaRappa The Rapper*. Now here's your chance, with our exclusive demo.

The key to playing *PaRappa The Rapper* is timing – that's what determines whether 'U rappin' cool' or not. Although it's hard not to get distracted by PaRappa's antics, you have to concentrate on the karaoke-style bars along the top of the screen. Match the rhythm of your button-presses to the indicators here, and you'll soon be rapping with the best.

Controls
The basic idea behind *PaRappa The Rapper* couldn't be simpler. Each button represents a particular part of the rap. All you have to do is follow the karaoke bar at the top of the screen, pressing the right button at the right time. What could be easier?

Additional features
The complete game has six basic levels, but with a bit of skill you can access



the special levels where you get the chance to rap freestyle.

Further information
When we reviewed *PaRappa The Rapper* in last month's issue we thought that its wonderfully unique and quirky (if slightly short) experience was worth eight out of ten. For thirty quid, you really can't go wrong.



Net Yaroze

PUBLISHER: SCEI
STYLE: Miscellaneous game demos
PROGRAM: Rolling demo

For a while it looked like the Yaroze was going to be little more than an expensive toy. Now, though, it seems that people are finally

getting to grips with the machine, and the results are very impressive. On this two-minute video you can see 12 examples of Yaroze games from the UK, USA and Japan. Some look very good indeed, including a delightful 3D RPG and a technically marvelous adventure displayed in the hi-res mode. Look out for more Yaroze games soon.

Test Drive 4: The Challenge

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
STYLE: Racing sim
PROGRAM: Playable demo

For game historians the name *Test Drive* will invoke memories of some great Commodore 64 and Amiga racing games. Fortunately for racing fans, the classic Accolade franchise has now been given a revival with the recent release of *Test Drive: Off Road*, and now *Test Drive 4: The Challenge* is nearly ready.

Test Drive 4 lets you drive a variety of 'muscle cars' like the Dodge Viper, TVR Cerbera, and Corvette. Rather than zooming around a track, the races take place on real roads, complete with traffic travelling in both directions which certainly keeps things, well, interesting. In order to continue racing



you have to reach each checkpoint along the road before your time runs out. The game has been developed by the same team that brought us *Destruction Derby 2*, so you can expect a fast and exhilarating drive.

Our exclusive demo of *Test Drive 4* features a playable version of the first four checkpoints of the Keswick track, along with a choice of two cars – the Dodge Viper or the AC Cobra. Although the designers have classed this track as 'easy', that's not quite the word we'd use. It starts off fairly simple, but soon gets nasty when you have to dive in and out of the traffic at a terrifying speed. We prefer to play the game from the behind-the-car viewpoint, but if you want to experience the game at its fastest then try the in-car view. Now that's a challenge.



1 The Dodge comes in two models, fast and very fast.
2 The game is full of elaborate effects and statistics.

Controls

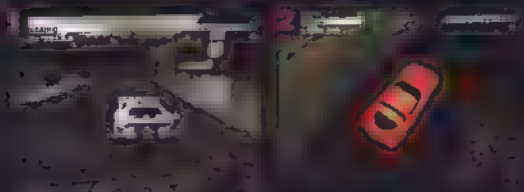
- ← Left
- Right
- ⊗ Accelerate
- ⊙ Brake
- ⌂ Change view

Additional features

The finished *Test Drive 4* will feature six tracks, along with 17 cars.

Further information

We previewed *Test Drive 4* back in *PSM22* and we were very impressed with what we saw. The game's nearly finished now, so expect a full review in the next issue or two.



1 Everyone's favourite modern racer, the Dodge Viper.
2 The game can be played from many viewpoints.

Croc

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
STYLE: 3D platformer
PROGRAM: Playable demo

Following the release and massive success of *Super Mario 64*, 3D platform games have become all the rage, with publishers rushing to compete in this growing genre. Not all of them get it right – just look at *Bubsy 3D* – but every so often a decent game appears. Aimed at the younger market, *Croc* concerns a young crocodile who wanders around the Land of the Gobbos rescuing these little rat-like creatures from tons of slimy nasties.

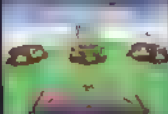
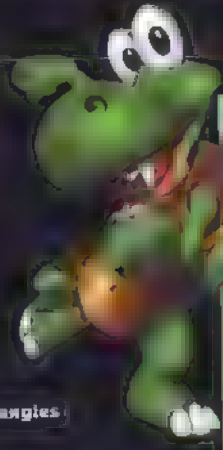
In the demo you're given a few minutes to work your way through the first level. Pay attention to the walls, as often you can see little handgrips allowing Croc to climb up to higher levels. Every so often you'll also come across little tree stumps – a quick jump and slam on these will uncover a lower level where, no doubt, loads of little furry things will be running around. Once you've found the key you can open the doors, put the Gobbos in your satchel and run for it.

Controls

- ← Turn left
- Turn right
- ↑ Forward
- ↓ Back
- ⊙ Jump
- ⊗ Attack
- ⌂ 180° turn
- ⊙ Alter camera angles
- ⊙ Step left
- ⊙ Step right
- ⊙ Adjust camera
- ⊙ Adjust camera

Additional features

This demo covers the first level of the first world of *Croc*, but there are another five levels from this world, followed by another three worlds. By collecting all of the Gobbos it's possible to access a special world, but don't expect to be able to do this without a lot of practice and patience.



What can be easier than wondering around looking for some gobbos?

Further information

Croc is reviewed on page 101, where we award it seven out of ten. It has its faults, but it also has more than enough good points to qualify it as one of the best *Mario* clones released so far, especially for younger gamers.



Abe's Oddysee



1.1 With timing you can cause some wonderful explosions. 1.1 Make sure you duck when you ring a grenade at the Sligs as they do make a mess when they explode. 1.1 The spiritual levels. 1.1 You didn't want to do that. 1.1 In the later levels you can use the portals as a means of crossing the lands quickly.



PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
STYLE: 2D platformer
PROGRAM: Playable demo

As we've heard from a few letters, the second demo disc last month was not without its problems, and some people had trouble getting it to load. So, because we're so kind, we thought it was worth running another version of the demo in this issue.

For those of you who weren't paying attention last month, you play Abe, a slimy green chap who stumbles across plans to convert his race into a new range of tasty snacks. During your surveillance you're spotted by the evil Sligs and are forced to make a break for freedom. To guide you on your way, you ought to pay attention to the scrolling notices which tell you exactly how to pull off certain moves. For the purpose of the demo, you can only go as far as the outskirts of Rupture Farms, but the full game takes in an awful lot more, with Abe visiting temples, moons and mountain ranges.

CONTROLS

Throughout the first level, pay close attention to the info screens, as they hold the secrets to some of the special manoeuvres required in the game. Here are some of the basic controls to get you started:

- ↑ Enter door
- ↓ Roll into a ball

- ← Left
- Right
- Jump
- R Run
- R Sneak
- + L Chant/Precess
- Slig/Explode Slig when under your spell

- Gamespeak
- Hold L and press
- Hello
- Angry
- Stay here
- Follow me

Hold L and press

- Whistle
- Fast
- Whistle 2
- Laugh

Additional features
This demo is just a very small part of the game - the complete version of Abe's Oddysee is vast. From Rupture Farms you move on to the cliffs of Oddworld before stumbling into the Land of the Big Heads and even stranger places.

Further information
Last month we reviewed Abe's Oddysee and awarded it a well-deserved nine, calling it one of the best platform games ever to grace the PlayStation.

Deathtrap Dungeon

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive
STYLE: 3D adventure
PROGRAM: Rolling demo

Even the massive success of Tomb Raider for Eidos Interactive, most people would be surprised to find that Deathtrap Dungeon - a seemingly obvious rip-off of Lara's first outing - has in fact been in development for longer than its more illustrious stablemate. Set in a dark fantasy world, the game pits you against some of the

nastiest creatures ever to appear on the PlayStation as you struggle to explore a vast underground maze.

Additional features
The full game will feature two heroic adventurers to choose from as you hack your way through 16 monster-laden levels.

Further information
We gave Deathtrap Dungeon the PrePlay treatment in Issue 23. The game itself is due early next year.



Bushido Blade

PUBLISHER: SCEI
STYLE: 3D fighting game
PROGRAM: Rolling demo

As you can see in this demo, Bushido Blade is a very nice-looking Samurai hack-and-slash fighting game. But don't confuse it with Soul Blade, as this is a full 3D affair,

with the fighters able to run away from one another in the huge arenas. Another marked difference was the decision by developer SquareSoft to drop the energy bar system, and instead have hits injuring the player realistically - a chop to the leg will result in your opponent limping, whereas a slash to the head will see the player crumple to the floor in pain. Smart.

Additional features
Bushido Blade is the first beat 'em up to make use of the Analog pad's full potential, with a unique control system.

Further information
We've not yet had a chance to look at a finished PAL version of Bushido Blade, but we hope to bring you a full review very soon.



Bushido Blade is well worth a look for fighting fans.

**Tomb
Raider 2**



**Crash
Bandicoot 2**



Pandemonium 2



Colony Wars



Courier Crisis



Let's face it, a demo of *Tomb Raider 2* is all you're really interested in. But if you take off those blinkers you'll find at least four other playable titles that are well worth checking out, including sequels to two of PSM's cover stars of last year. Do not miss it.



Next Month

*Is that a gun in your pocket...
...or are you just pleased to see me?*

Lara Croft is back. Read our huge exclusive review of *Tomb Raider 2*, the most eagerly awaited game of the year, and then check out the amazing demo. Only in the Official UK PlayStation Magazine.

Plus

Grand Theft Auto, Pandemonium 2, Castlevania, Fighting Force, Rosco McQueen, Colony Wars, Overboard!, Marvel Super Heroes, and Shadow Master all reviewed.

Computer Trade Weekly (CTW) is the only trade newspaper for the entire UK and international interactive entertainment industry. Its readership span ranges from games dealers in Gateshead to CEOs at Sony in Japan. Stuart Dinsey is the smiling face behind it all... and (whisper it) he doesn't really like games

STUART DINSEY

How did you become editor of this esteemed organ?

I started out with a fancy London ad agency but I'd always wanted to be a journalist. When I applied to become a trainee on something called *CTW*, I had no idea of what the publication covered. In fact, any mention of the word 'computer' had been deliberately left out by the incumbent editor. If I'd known, I probably wouldn't have applied. So I joined as a reporter in 1986 and became editor two and half years later, when Greg left [Greg being Greg Ingham, now managing director of PSM's publishing company, Future Publishing]. I didn't actually want to become editor as I thought I was too young, but it seems to have gone pretty well.

So, you've been with CTW for 11 years - surely time for a change?

No, I'm still not bored with it. We have the chance to create something new every week. The people are constantly changing, the companies, the products. The industry's changed from a horrible little computer business into a huge arm of the entertainment business. When I started, it was full of unprofessional people with terrible little games, all too ready to slag off their rivals and swear on the record, and whatever. The games industry has grown up quite a lot. And besides all that, I'm a shareholder and director, so that tends to keep you interested.

'The industry's changed from a horrible little computer business into a huge arm of the entertainment business. When I started, it was full of unprofessional people with terrible little games, all too ready to slag off their rivals and swear on the record...'

Have you always been a games fan, or are you a late developer?

Heresy I know, but I'm still not a games 'fanatic'. I play some, I check out a lot. But it's the industry itself - its mechanics, its failings and its future - that really interests me.

What was the first game you ever played?

Space Invaders on an Atari VCS. A friend of mine had one of those Intellivision things, too. I never owned a home computer until I joined the industry, and still pretty much hate the things.

And what's your all-time favourite?

Championship Manager 2 on PC, *Actua Soccer* on PlayStation, *Sensible Soccer* on Amiga, the original *ISS* on SNES... There's a common theme developing here, isn't there?

Yes, your love of football is well-known within the industry and in particular your love of Chelsea - how will they do this year? And is Ruud Gullit a God?

Ruud is definitely a God - intelligent, modest, brilliant hair, great tactician. As for Chelsea, they'll ultimately disappoint, but it'll be fun along the way. They'll finish in the league position which is just short of a European place and get to the semis in the Cup Winners Cup.

Back to games... So, with your finger on the pulse of the industry, what do you think will be the Christmas number one on PlayStation this year?

Tomb Raider 2.

Hardly sticking your neck out there. Any other games you think will do well?

Anything from the new Psygnosis batch, Gremlin's *Actua Soccer 2* will sell buckets. *Nuclear Strike* from EA shouldn't be underrated.

Which games are you personally most looking forward to playing?

It has to be *Actua Soccer 2*.

And what's in your PlayStation games collection at the moment?

Too much. I just hope Sony and the publishers know what they're doing. A deluge of software for a format can be just as damaging as a dearth.

How do you see things changing in the PlayStation industry over the next 12 months?

Rental could become very important, especially as Sony is getting fully behind it. Weak titles may increasingly become rental-only, which has to be a good thing. Platinum will grow in importance, possibly even dropping in price by a fiver.

When do you think PlayStation 2 will start to emerge?

The games media will start the build-up once Christmas is over. Maybe something will be shown in Japan before the end of '98. Right now, I can't see

anything arriving in the UK and Europe until September '99.

And what will this Holy Grail be like?

Blimey. I'm not sure that even Sony is that certain yet of where to go next, and there's certainly plenty of life left in Mark 1. The successor could be a smaller box and neater design, with improvements in 3D graphics capabilities and some kind of Internet feature. But I honestly think Sony will hold back on a launch unless it really has something special to offer. Sega lost its grip on the market because of ill conceived upgrades and add-ons and that lesson should have been well and truly learned.

Finally, do you mind people nicking stories of you all the time, or is impersonation a form of flattery?

We don't mind people using our stuff. We publish for the trade and there's no reason why the stories shouldn't be given their own spin and passed on to consumers. A name-check would be nice, but we accept that journalists rarely like to admit they got their info from another publication. If someone's constantly taking the piss, we might have a quiet word with them. Generally, though, the best monthlies and on-line news services do a fine job of their own. We have a symbiotic relationship with most of them. And if the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine* wants to pinch our best stories, well what can we do, eh?...



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